DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 373 588 FL 800 754

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TITLE Literacy.
INSTITUTION German Adult Education Association, Bonn (West Germany).
PUB DATE Sep 88
NOTE 409p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Adult Education and Development; n31 Sep 1988

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC17 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Change Strategies; Creoles; Educational Assessment; *Educational Change; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Literacy Education; Parochial Schools; Politics of Education; Program Descriptions; Reading Instruction; Translation; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS Germany; Haiti; India; *International Literacy Year 1990; Madagascar; Morocco; Nigeria; Papua New Guinea; Saint Lucia; Senegal; Thailand; Turkey; Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

A collection of articles on adult literacy education includes essays, letters, poetry, interviews, research reports, and discussions of issues in literacy and adult basic education in both developing and developed countries. The first section contains brief articles about programs and initiatives in developing countries, including Madagascar, Morocco, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, St. Lucia, Thailand, Senegal, Turkey, Papua New Guinea, and India. Subsequently, articles address general issues concerning development and promotion of literacy education. These include objectives and impact of literacy education, international cooperation, procurement of appropriate instructional materials, concerns unique to adult literacy, classroom techniques, and basic skills instruction. Several articles focus on the significance of International Literacy Year (1990). (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Adult Education and Development

Orality Studies Methods Materials Experiences Debate
Extracts Ily 1990

September 1988 Number 31
German Adult Education Association

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ADULT EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

ORA**L**ITY
STUD**I**ES
ME**T**HODS
MAT**E**RIALS
EXPE**R**IENCES
DEB**A**TE
EXTRA**C**TS
IL**Y** 1990

September 1988 **Number 31**
GERMAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION **DVV**

FL 800 754

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ADULT EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

is a half-yearly journal for adult education in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At first, in 1973, the journal was intended by the German Adult Education Association (DVV) to help keep in touch with past participants in DVV further training seminars and to support the work of projects abroad. Today, the journal is a forum for dialogue and the exchange of information between adult educators and authors in Africa, Asia and Latin America, both among themselves and with colleagues in the industrialised nations. It is intended to disseminate and discuss new experiences and developments in the theory and practice of adult education. The main target group consists of adult educators working at so-called middle levels in teaching, organization or administration. Increasingly, staff in related fields such as health education, agriculture, vocational training, cooperative organizations etc. have been included, as their tasks are clearly adult education tasks. We also aim at adult educators at higher and top levels, academics, library staff and research institutions both in Africa, Asia and Latin America and in the industrialised nations.

We herewith invite adult educators from all parts of the world to contribute to this journal. Articles should bear a considerable reference to practice. All fields of adult education and development can be treated, i.e. adult education should be regarded in its widest sense. We kindly ask you to send us articles of about 1500 words; footnotes should be used as sparingly as possible.

Responsible for contents are the authors. Signed articles do not always represent the opinion of the German Adult Education Association. You are invited to reproduce and reprint the articles provided acknowledgement is given and a copy is sent to us.

»Adult Education and Development« is published by the German Adult Education Association, Department for International Cooperation (Responsible: Jakob Horn).

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Editor: Heribert Hinzen
Secretariat: Marita Kowalski
Composition, Layout, Repro: DK Kierzkowski, Bonn
Printer: Druck Center Meckenheim

Editorial

The declaration of 1990 as the International Literacy Year by the United Nations is a challenge for all providers of adult education and literacy worldwide. For some in the development business it will remain just another international year of …; while for many others it will hopefully result in meaningful activities for the improvement and widening of literacy provision for those who are ready to learn.

UNESCO has already prepared a practical guide for the implementation of the International Literacy Year (ILY) and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) has invited colleagues and institutions to become members of the International Task Force on Literacy, which has met twice in the meantime. You can find more information on these plans further on in this issue.

The German Adult Education Association (DVV) decided to contribute to the preparation of ILY by publishing a special issue of its journal »Adult Education and Development«. We invited contributions from all over the world, sent circular letters to potential authors, and discussed the planned outline with interested colleagues. The response has been enormous and although we have had to fix a deadline because of production and mailing purposes, we continue to receive many good manuscripts. We are keeping these and any others which we may receive for publication at a later date.

We sincerely want to thank all authors, editors, publishers and other professionals who helped us in making this issue of our journal a reality. In this respect we want to give special mention to Mrs Anja Weber who has been of considerable help to us in the editorial office with this and some of the past numbers. She joins us in wishing our readers an enjoyable and fruitful reading and learning,

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as well as in expressing the hope to receive comments on the manuscripts printed and reports on experiences related to literacy activities from all over the world during ILY. I must confess that I have enjoyed working on this special issue very much; I think we have learned a lot by reading and reflecting on literally thousands of pages concerned with our theme.

We hope that you agree with the editorial decision to feature, together with the many experiences, case studies, suggestions for methods and materials and plans for ILY, several articles on issues concerned with orality and literacy — those looking at the great divide theories as well as the continuum in the changing modes of communication — oral, written, print, electronic —, and those concerned with the grand debate of the relationship between literacy and development. DVV in this respect appreciates that our invitation to the dialogue on and for literacy which we started about five years ago has created new initiatives with broader concepts related to the diversity of approaches relevant to the different cultural settings, and a hopefully growing response in international cooperation.

However, the resentment expressed by adult educators regarding the over-emphasis on literacy still exists. I have just returned from a meeting in the Asian region which was attended by a good number of senior representatives from adult education institutions. Following the statement and request by one colleague to provide a considerable slice of the budget for literacy work, the comments by his fellow colleagues included the following:

— »We have to realize that sometimes literacy is a burden to people. It keeps them away from farming and takes them out of the village.«

— »All this talking about literacy is noise by the broiler chicken, it is not noise by the village chicken.«

- »No money for meetings, task forces etc.; we better use the money to buy books for the learners and readers«.

- »We need more information about successful stories of literacy programmes. What has worked in which context, why and how?«

All these were statements by leaders of large national adult education institutions in different Asian countries. All of them are not against literacy, but all of them have had their own experiences in the past decades and have become wary of subscribing to unrealistic promises and simplistic solutions.

During the years I worked in adult education in Sierra Leone, the cooperating adult education institutions posed the question: »Are we ready for literacy in Sierra Leone?« We indeed wondered whether we as providers were ready for the huge task ahead. Later we developed a sticker which we distributed in tens of thousands in Sierra Leone; it carried the slogan: »Be ready for literacy!« This was meant as an invitation to both the providers and potential learners. Today we assume that there is still a long way for us to go before the announced ILY 1990, or it shall lead to one more of those international years of ...

Now a few words on one other point. In 1983 we conducted an evaluation exercise on the first 15 years of this journal. A good number of readers, authors, editors and development workers participated. Several findings pointed — in the words of the writers — to the following problem:

- »While I agree there should be an emphasis on practical examples, some philosophical and theoretical articles would be of interest.«

— »The deliberate discouragement of full-scale works, bibliography and references rob many of the contributions of the status of in-depth-studies.«

— »While we like short articles, they have remained somewhat superficial. Perhaps you could include one or two lengthier case studies in each issue.«

The analysis of the questionnaires mailed to all readers stated:

»There are readers who think the journal should do 'a bit less sloganeering', and who stress 'more enquiry, research and intellectual exploration'. Another reader would like to have 'a clear idea of honest distinction between propaganda and fact'. Others said the articles should be 'more in-depth', 'more analytical, less narrative'. These and similar statements came, without exception, from adult educators working in top level positions.

Contrary to them, others felt that the articles should be shorter, less academic and less theoretical.

In line with the mixed readership of AED, both sides have to be taken into acount. I think there is no harm done when this practice-oriented journal publishes an article 'on the fundamental analysis of theory' now and then.«

These and other statements resulted in the recommendation: »AED should include more analytical and reflective material, whilst retaining its predominantly practical orientation«.

Keeping this and the last issue of our journal in mind, we think that the articles by Kenneth King on »Training for the urban informal sector in developing countries: issues for practitioners« and by Georg Elwert on »The social and institutional context of literacy« are very much in line with these ideas — hopefully not too long, too in-depth, too theoretical etc. for some of our readers.

We have continued with the tradition that good manuscripts of the past are selected for reprint. This issue carries about ten — all related to literacy of course. We have not printed them separately but added them to the respective sub-sections thematically. They can be identified through the index published in the last number; or more readily by the fact that they do not have the short introductory passage.

Heribert Hinzen

We herewith invite our readers to become **authors of our journal**. Possible themes of the next issues are:

- Culture and communication
- international cooperation, partnership and professionalism
- evaluation and research
- orality, literacy, print and electronic media
- technology: innovations, transfer and alternatives
- global and local concerns: environment and peace
- teaching, training and learning

We are interested in looking at these themes by way of case studies, reports, statements, stories and poems reflecting theoretical and/or practical implications for us as adult educators. We would appreaciate it if graphic material, photos etc. could be added.

Please contact the editor.

A letter to the editor

Dear Heribert Hinzen,

I have just read the recent issue of Adult Education and Development (No. 29) with much pleasure and interest and feel I should write to congratulate you. It is one of the most useful and helpful in the series so far.

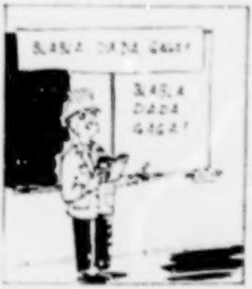
I am also prompted to send you the full quotation of the passage on page 116. The late Professor Joad is the author, in his words:

»A lecture is the means whereby the contents of the lecturer's notes are transferred to the notebooks of the students without passing through the minds of either.«

I think that you will agree that the last phrase makes it even more pointed…!

You may also be amused by a comment from the late Dean Inge that:

»Attempting to educate people by talking at them is like trying to fill a roomful of narrow-necked bottles by throwing water over them…«


BABA DADA GAGA!
BABA
DADA
GAGA!

"The lecture method of teaching is the best way to transfer the teacher's notes to the students' notebooks without ever passing through their minds."

Every good wish,

Yours sincerely

Derek Legge
(Retired Head,
Department of Adult Education,
University of Manchester)

ORALITY
STUDIES
METHODS
MATERIALS
EXPERIENCES
DEBATE
EXTRACTS
LITERACY
1990

EXPERIENCES AND CASE STUDIES

This mixture of interview, dialogue and reflection is an interesting account of the current literacy situation in Madagascar. It is the first article in this journal which concentrates on this large African island. DVV started an expanded form of cooperation with this country by opening a liason office in 1987.
Mr. Alaoy is the director of the Department for Popular Education and Literacy in the Ministry of Population, Social Services and Sports. Julien Rakotonairo is the head of the Media Division in the same ministry. Mr. Wolfgang Leumer is a staff member of DVV's International Department and is presently in Madagascar on a three year assignment.

Alaoy / Wolfgang Leumer / Julien Rakotonairo

Literacy is not a bowl of rice

Part one

Here is the account given by the Director for Popular Education and Literacy stating the process of a change of awareness.

Question: *Mister Director, on the eve of the celebration of the international year of literacy and at a time when your department has* *been in existence for ten years, can you assess the state of literacy work in Madagascar?*

Answer: Literacy is not new in Madagascar. Since independence and even during the colonial period, Madagascar has been the field of various experiments in literacy. For the sake of example, I would like to mention the action undertaken by the Army in the form of rural animation and the World Experimental Literacy Programme (WELP) carried out by UNESCO. The results were not spectacular, although they were not negligible either. The aim of all these activities was, above all, to produce graduates to be integrated into the formal educational system or into administration. This took place until 1970. In 1972 the Malagasy educational system was called in question and a structural reform undertaken. Inevitably, this brought about the stagnation of literacy until 1975. From 1975, with the advent of the socialist government, a new importance was attached to literacy. Consequently, in 1977 the Deparment of Literacy and Adult Education was created. Because of insufficient staff, one resorted to secondary school graduates who were doing their para-military service at the population ministry. But this progressively diminished so that a new strategy using voluntary instructors was adopted.

Question: *Given the resources at your disposal, namely the budget, the staff and the materials, are the results obtained proportional to the resources invested?*

Answer: Obviously, if an equation between the invested means and the number of literate adults is drawn up yearly, literacy turns out to be the most expensive school on earth. At this stage, it is difficult to compare it to the formal educational system. However, when everything is taken into account, literacy can be considered as an investment since it is not only the construction of a dam and schools which constitute an investment. In reality, through literacy and popular education the adults directly participate in the development of the nation even if the expenses entailed are not always proportional to the results obtained.

Question: *In the villages where you have carried out literacy activities, is there a real integration of the neo-literate persons in the efforts for development?*

Answer: Bearing in mind the aim of literacy, one realizes that literacy is far more than the acquisition of simple reading and writing skills. These skills must be useful in one's daily life. The adult learners expect programmes which meet their basic needs and if this does not occur, their numbers decrease.

Indeed, literacy is not a bowl of rice. That is why it is essential to elaborate a programme adapted to the needs of the people concerned. For some time now programes are no longer drawn up at our headquarters. They are planned with the participation of the adult learners concerned and not imposed by our department.

Question: *You have just mentioned some major obstacles to the achievement of literacy, in particular the case of programmes which don't meet the needs of the people. To what other means do you resort to motivate people?*

Answer: It's difficult to enumerate them all. They depend on the needs of the people (any vocational activity). To solve the problem, we have set up Committees for Literacy in charge of the motivation, the organization of campaigns and the accomplishment of the programmes. There are also small libraries and cultural centres in the different villages to enable the people to uphold and improve their reading and writing skills.

Question: *What is the role held by your department in relation to other partners and ministries?*

Answer: My department is a »catalysor« and above all a »facilitator«. It doesn't mean that we perform popular education and literacy without help from others. There are the other ministries such as the agricultural ministry, the health ministry and the information ministry. However, this demands harmonising and coordination of the joint activities to make their impact complementary and not contradictory for the population concerned since our aim is identical, namely to improve the quality of life in rural areas. Apart from these national partners, there are also the international ones like DVV for example. Together, my department and DVV have developed a programme resulting from a series of workshops at provincial level. A new approach regarding popular education has been adopted: an approach which sees literacy not as a miraculous remedy for all the problems engendered by underdevelopment and from the concept that stress should be placd on »Popular Education«. Strictly speaking, it is possible to perform popular education without having literacy. Besides the workshops mentioned above, we will establish in each of the six provinces an experimental centre. We've already started the publication of a monthly bulletin called *»Takalo«* (exchange). We also plan to publish reading materials whose content reflect the different themes determined during these workshops.

Question: *At present, does your department possess the means which enable it to carry out its policy or does it only adopt a policy imposed by its means?*

Answer: We rather adopt a policy imposed by our means. But with the help of means offered by DVV, we endeavour to establish a complementarity between our means and those offered by our partners.

Question: *Do you intend to widen your field of action and do you think that your task will be easier than before?*

Answer: Our tasks will be more difficult and more numerous. The experimental centres will also be training centres for the literacy supervisors. Doubtless, these centres will have a multiplier-effect which will inevitably widen our field of action and render our responsibility greater.

That much on the philosophy and perspective of Malagasy adult education and literacy.

Part two

King and facilitator

An important link for DEPA's policy are the 110 monitors (adult education supervisors) scattered across the whole country. If we literally translate the Malagasy term *mpanentana* they could also be called »facilitators«.

We held a second interview with one of these supervisors working at district-level: this supervisor is at the same time king of a populace of 80,000 people in northern Madagascar. He is called King Tsimiharo III.

Question: *Prince Tsimiharo III, could you briefly talk to us about yourself and your being a prince?*

Answer: After King Tsimiharo II's death who was my father's elder brother, the councillors appointed me as his successor. I was enthroned on the 11th of June 1982 at Ambatarano. And on the 6th of November 1982 the first ceremonial event of the *Tsangatsaina* (cult of the erection of a wooden symbolical statue) took plaçe. Up until that time I had served as a policeman. But the king's role which I had to assume and the people's wishes compelled me to give up this post and seek another one within the population ministry.

Question: *How many persons do you represent within your kingdom?*

Answer: As far as the district of Ambilobe is concerned, there are about 64,000 persons, but there are still many in Antsiranana and the district of Vohemar.

Question: *Why did you choose this job within the system of popular education and literacy?*

Answer: I find the monitor's tasks of teaching, helping and making people aware very relevant to my duty as a king. As a policeman, I rather had to conduct inquiries in order to punish people.

Question: *Working as a monitor, don't you come across some conflicts between your traditional role and the more or less technical one?*

Answer: Up to now, I haven't experienced any problems. On the contrary, I take delight in it since I have become very popular.

Question: *How do you work? Could you tell us about your daily time-table?*

Answer: Almost every day (except Tuesdays), at about six or seven hour a.m., I fulfill my duties as a King. People come to see me to seek advice, to settle their differences or to get rid of their *Tromba* (possession by the evil). At about eight or nine a.m., I leave for the office.

Question: *As a monitor, do you look after the volunteer instructors who wish to be assisted in their literacy-work? How do you deal with this problem?*

Answer: Up until now, I have always assisted the young graduates doing their para-military service. And I've also trained volunteer instructors.

Question: *Are you satisfied with the work of these young graduates doing their para-military service?*

Answer: Last year, yes. In 1985 the results were not satisfactory. Some of the young people from town are unable to adapt to rural life (mosquitos, health problems and the lack of entertainment).

Question: *Do you think that literacy will bring about advantages? Do people demand literacy at all or do they have other worries?*

Answer: One has to explain the meaning of literacy to the rural people thoroughly, then they will become eager to become literates.

Question: *In the areas where you've already undertaken literacy, do you think that people will be able to retain these new skills and techniques through their own efforts?*

Answer: Probably. Thanks to literacy and to raising awareness, the people are motivated. They often come to my office to look for something to read (newspapers and so on). They organize communal activities (agricultural activities, building of schools and dispensaries). Through these their quality of life will be improved.

Question: *If more efforts in literacy and adult education are to be made and you are asked to make suggestions concerning your district, what would you suggest?*

Answer: That we be given tools for production (for example: ploughs for young farmers' associations) and vehicles.

Question: *When you work as a monitor, do people see in you the King or a government agent?*

Answer: Both. They find it natural since to animate the people is also a King's duty.

Part three

The new strategy: adult education at village level. Andranomena: the first experimental centre

Heeding the criticism concerning the previous literacy approach, DEPA and DVV have together evolved and started adult educational programmes in special locations. These programmes had to take the daily living conditions of the people into account. So the population had to first be asked as to the content of any programme which would suit them. Such a process of participatory exploration is described below:

The monitors from the respective provinces chose the villages where these experimental centres were to be established. The criteria for this choice were:

- A good working relationship between the people and the monitor
- The people are willing to undertake any common activities which will improve the quality of their life
- Access to the village is relatively easy to ensure regular communication.

Andranomena, the first experimental village, has 280 inhabitants who share the 80 huts of the 3 hamlets. It is 5 km from the district-city of Mampikony and 2km from the national road linking the capital to Mahajanga.

Five in number, we left the cold capital. We reached Mampikony late in the afternoon after ten hour's drive. This very day, the monitor was to inform the people of our planned visit. Of course, they were not obliged to bid us a ceremonial welcome. They had to go about their daily tasks. It was our duty to join them to discuss matters while they were working. The following day, we organized a big forum to discuss the procedures. In the morning, our delegation split into two groups. The first went to the rice-field near the fishing river. There, they came into contact with the tillers. I was in the second group. We came across the people of the second hamlet who were attending a *Tromba* ceremony. A sick child was being cured by dances and songs taught by a traditional faith-healer. It was why all the children in the hamlet did not go to school that day. Without exception, they all formed a small round point on their forehead with white powder obtained from ground *manioc*. They then began dancing and singing around the sick child. After this, we went into other matters.

We first of all gave the reasons for our visit. In turn, they bid us welcome and took us around the village. They showed us their huts which are at the same time bedroom, kitchen and foodstore. Even ducks and hens are often kept in these huts. We gazed at the rice-fields surrounding the village and which were almost harvested. Accompanied by the elders of the village, we went to see the two existing wells, then we cast a glance at the park for the cattle which was empty because they had been taken to graze in the surrounding disctrict. Willfully, they answered our questions. Chairs were brought for us, but wanting to be on the same level as the people, we joined the men and women sitting on mats, forming a circle with them. The weather was hot. Several questions relating to their problems and needs were posed. Because of the scarcity of rain, the rice was not sufficient to cover the whole year. On top of that, they still used the *angandy* (the spade) and a wooden harrow to work their rice-fields. Facts which drove us to ask them: »Why don't you use a plough drawn by cows?« They told us that it is too expensive since the cost of the plow is 70,000francs. After this, we dealt with health problems. They said that everybody was healthy. And what about the *Tromba?* The child was really suffering from the *Bemangovitra* (a powerful shivering) that is to say malaria. Consequently, it can't be said that there are no diseases here. But this phenomenon is regarded as normal so it does not arise in the list of problems. In this village, it so happens that eight families own more than sixty cows. From time to time, they sell a cow at 60,000 Francs; with this money they buy calves and thus increase the number of their cattle. With this situation in mind, the following question was asked: »Why don't you buy a plough with the price of the cow to produce more rice?«. At this question from a European whose ruling passion is to invest and who hasn't an inkling of what the herd means for the people, they burst into laughter. In fact, the more one possesses, the more one is esteemed. That is why it is difficult for them to consider selling a cow in order to purchase a plough. And yet, there is a new threat of famine!

These first impressions made us aware that we were not going to understand their way of living. We needed time. Furthermore, it would be necessary for us to meet them several times in order to establish mutual trust and understanding. We admit that it is an exacting and lengthy task but essential if satisfactory results are to be achieved.

What we know about the village now is this:
The main activity in the village is the cultivation of rice. Each cultivator tills his own land. When the great landowners are not up to working their fields, they hire a labourer to work their lands for a trivial wage. These two facts make the *Metayage* on rice-fields very scarce. The labour is done by hand. Because of the small productivity, due to the traditional techniques and to extreme scarcity of

rain, rice production does not satisfy consumption anymore. Apart from rice, onions, potatoes and *manioc* are also cultivated. The fish caught are treated and dried. A good part of these products are sold on the market at Mampikony because there are neither shops nor markets in the village. The school frequented by the ninety pupils is situated within the central hamlet. It is a primary school. It has only two classrooms but there are three teachers so that the third one is obliged to teach outdoors. This is the very reason why the village people wish to build a new classroom. As for the adults, the percentage of literacy is 20%. At present, 80 adults attend a literacy-class which takes place on Sundays only as this is the only day when the school is free. Five volunteer teachers and a graduate doing his para-military service run the course. The monitor comes every fortnight.

In the village, there is no health service. The people have to walk to Mampikony or go there in an ox-cart to be vaccinated or to obtain medicine. During the rainy season, the wells are completely destroyed since the water rises very high and brings about their collapse. This raises the problem of drinking water. To tell the truth, it is possible to extend the tilled surfaces quickly, as enough arable land still exists. To do this, it is advisable to build a small dam and to dig pipes for irrigation. Until now, they have been built with clayish soil so that they always disappear after the rainy season. Other types of construction are not known. It is also not known where and how a dam can be built properly. However, solutions to these problems are regarded by the villagers to be of fundamental importance.

The entire village can thrive; wells and school buildings can be constructed through the people's manual work. What about the appraisal of wells and dams? Here, we can act as adult educators, that is to say, we will supply them with information, tools, cement, plans for the construction of dams and wells and the roof of the school. We will also bring in topographers. Naturally, before our second visit to the village, we will seek the cooperation of other ministries in undertaking this hard work. Meanwhile, the people have to chose four persons who, for a period of three or four months, will be trained to acquire knowledge related to cash-cropping, to the improvement of houses, to medical care and to simple technological know-how. During their training, the rest of the people will look after their families and lands.

We will return to the village in two months time. We hope that before this, we will acquire enough knowledge concerning the construction of dams and wells. Maybe the walls of the new classroom will be already finished. Next time, we will take a bicycle, a plough and a kerosene lamp with us.

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This article looks at some possible and real relationships between traditional Islamic teaching and modern Moroccan education. Fatima Bekkhar is a Moroccan journalist. It is a reprint from IDRC Reports, January 1988. If you are interested in the journal, please write to P.O. Box 8500, Ottawa, K1G 3H9, Canada.

Fatima Bekkhar

Morocco's Koranic schools

Sitting cross-legged on mats in front of the teacher, the children sway back and forth as they recite in droning tones the verses of the Koran. The younger ones mouth the words of the older children who struggle to decipher the verse written on the wooden tablets held in their laps. The scene is typical of the »*M'sid*« or Koranic school usually found next to the mosque in all villages of rural Morocco.

At the end of the harvest season, the villagers launch a search for the »*taleb*« — the person who will teach their children the Koran and the basics of Muslim religion. The search is not easy. The villagers cannot choose one of their own as *taleb* because it is difficult to dismiss a fellow villager if the need arises. A *taleb* who is married cannot bring his wife and children to live with him in the village — a restriction aimed at avoiding possible disagreements between his family and the villagers.

Other qualifications are equally tough because a good *taleb* is more than a teacher of the Koran. He plays an important role as advisor to the villagers and therefore must remain neutral on all village issues. The villagers not only question him on religious matters but also discuss with him their worries, fears, and wrongdoings, seeking answers and reassurance from him.

Once the *taleb* has been selected, the villagers make an agreement with him regarding payment. Usually he is given local produce such as grain, barley, almonds, or corn instead of money. He is provided with accomodation close to the school and is fed by the families of the village. Sought after by everyone in the village, the *taleb* has an abundance of choices as to who will be his host on any given day. Every Thursday, on the eve of communal prayer day, and every feast day, each pupil gives the *taleb* one or two *dirhams* (Moroccan currency) as token wage.

Together with the parents, the *taleb* is responsible for the education of the children. Most youngsters attend the *M'sid* beginning at age five and leave as soon as they are old enough to work in the fields. The especially gifted remain until they have learned the entire Koran. No pupil in the *M'sid* is older than 15 or 16.

A Moroccan sociologist, Ahmed Zougarri, professor at the Hassan II Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, is currently studying Koranic schools in a project funded by IDRC. »The M'sids and the taleb are important elements in the education of Moroccans,« says Mr Zougarri, »and therefore a method must be found to help the taleb perform his functions.«

One might assume that Koranic schools prepare children for primary school and that there is close cooperation between traditional and modern schools. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

In Koranic schools, up to 40 children are jammed into a small room three or four metres square. The pupils are split into three levels according to how long they have been studying in the *M'sid*. As the days pass, they learn verses of the Koran which the *taleb* believes do not require explanation. Although the children may know how to read and write the verses on the wooden tablets, many in fact do not understand their meaning.

Neither the *taleb* nor anyone else teaches the children arithmetic. Villagers consider it more important for their sons to know how to perform their ablutions and prayers than to read, write and count.

Mr Zougarri, who concentrated much of his research on the relationship between the teachers and villagers in rural Morocco, found that the latter distrust the modern schools and see no benefit in them. Both the school and its teacher are seen as intruders because it is not the villagers who select them. Not only are school and teacher imposed on the villagers, but they bring a lifestyle and a manner of thinking much different from theirs. The requirements and demands of city life are transplanted to the villagers (many of them isolated) without any regard for the socioeconomic and cultural conditions prevalent in rural Morocco.

To register their children in these unwanted modern schools, rural people must incur expenses well beyond their means. If they want their children to succeed, they must also help them with homework and studies. That, of course, becomes impossible because the parents themselves are illiterate and can't afford tutors.

What sometimes happens is that rural people register their children in the modern school to show good will, then take them out after four or five months because of financial hardship. It is not surprising, then, that over 70 percent of the population in Morocco today is illiterate.

Koranic schools have the potential to become a major force in the fight against illiteracy and to stimulate a progressive dialogue among rural Moroccans. As long as the people see no need for modern education, however, the Koranic schools will continue to be ignored by the authorities and will remain an untapped educational resource.

We herewith invite our readers to become **authors of our journal**. Possible themes of the next issues are:

- Culture and communication
- international cooperation, partnership and professionalism
- evaluation and research
- orality, literacy, print and electronic media
- technology: innovations, transfer and alternatives
- global and local concerns: environment and peace
- teaching, training and learning.

We are interested in looking at these themes by way of case studies, reports, statements, stories and poems reflecting theoretical and/or practical implications for us as adult educators. We would appreaciate it if graphic material, photos etc. could be added.

Please contact the editor.

Beate Schmidt's article reports on a literacy project in Haiti which was carried out over a period of two years (1986 – 1988) with three target groups (rural and urban), each with approx. 15 participants. The project was conceived and carried out by a group of approx. ten Haitian women. While the preparation work was carried out by one group without any financial assistance, the execution and evaluation (approx. 14 months) was financed by a Dutch organisation which has supported various projects in Haiti over the years. The author participated in the project as co-ordinator and educational advisor.

Aims of the project were:

1. *To provide reading, writing and arithmetical material related to the everyday life and the specific problems of the women participating.*
2. *To give women the opportunity to get to know each other, to exchange problems, to organise themselves and to plan long-term joint activities.*
3. *To support women interested in planning suitable income-yielding activities; e.g. through the establishment of a fonds from which revolving credit at low interest could be made available.*

Beate Schmidt

Women's literacy project in Haiti

Selection of the target groups

Three target groups were planned for participation in the project. This number appeared justifiable particularly with regard to the size of the working group and made us confident that sufficient data could be collected to facilitate a comparison between the groups. At the start of the project there were two groups in Port-au-Prince and one group in the country, about five hours driving distance away. All groups arose through personal contact; the women were eager to learn to read and write, so that no motivation work was necessary. A further, significant selection criteria was the more or less homogenous structure of the group in relation to the economic activities of the women. This meant that eventual joint activities would be easier.

The women in the one group were market women who sold mainly food items. None of them had an income which exceeded US $ 30 a month. The women in the second group were, with one exception, unemployed. All had attended school for one year but had then left because their parents were no longer able to pay the fees. Motivation for participation in a literacy course was varied. One frequently mentioned reason was not having to be ashamed any more at not being able to read and thus being taken for ignorant.

Outline of a provisional learning programme

The literacy programme was directed, as far as possible, at the interests of the participating groups. The following steps were taken: in the initial meetings with the women, questions regarding organisation were clarified and the project introduced. The tutors took down an exact account of the women's situation in order to gain insight into their problems. These general discussions on their situation as women were recorded, evaluated according to linguistic criteria and classified thematically. Apart from this, the women were given a preliminary test in order to determine their reading and writing abilities. In these classes an initial introduction to reading and writing vowels took place. The actual programme was then prepared on a weekly basis so that the week's evaluation could be taken into consideration in the planning of the next class. All the classes were recorded so that the wealth of information resulting from the discussions could be evaluated afterwards. In this way, certain themes could be dealt with in more depth and persistent problems connected with individual sounds or letters, attended to more systematically.

The programme consisted of three phases:

1. The aim of the first phase was to be able to read and write all vowels and consonants and to form simple words and sentences with them.

2. The aim of the second phase was to read and write words and sentences containing combined consonants as e.g. in *gwoses* (pregnancy) or *legliz* (church).

3. In the third phase emphasis was placed on writing stories and the practical application of skills in everyday life.

Apart from this, it was also planned to teach basic calculation skills by way of practical activities (e.g. by calculating revenue and expenditure for the organisation of a party).

In the first informal talks with the women, three main themes crystallized. They related to the areas **work — reproduction — participation**. For each of these areas, sub-themes were compiled which together made up the programme. Each theme was introduced by way of a 'generative word' within a sentence.

Through the 'generative word', reading and writing skills were progressively broadened. These 'generative words' were coordinated with the individual groups at the beginning of the project and, after evaluation in all three groups, were changed to the effect that they accompanied the development process of a group in a more general manner.

Schematic summary of content

In the following schema, the themes of the individual classes are described as they arose from the evaluation of the work with the three groups.

In the first phase of the project, the emphasis of the 'generative words' was at the **reflective** level; here in the area of work, concrete **action** is encouraged after the phase of reflection.

Subject area **work**: The participants analyse their working situation. They draw up an exact time-study to provide information on activities which are the most time-consuming and where eventual changes can be made, e.g. in the case of rural women — can the introduction of suitable technology be a first step in reducing the workload of women. The social causes for the double and treble workload of women are studied and the significance of the organisation for realising their own interests made clear.

Content	*Word*
The life of a woman	LAVI (life)
The inferiority of female work, underpaid or not paid at all, double and treble workload of women.	BESELEVE (to bend, to lift)
The tools which women use for their work. Importance of reading and writing skills as tools.	ZOUTI (tool)
Alternatives to present life. Opportunities for change. Readiness to change.	CHANJE (to change)

Content	*Word*
Readiness of each individual participant to activate change. What form of change can the group tolerate?	NOU (we)
Possibilities of the organisation. Advantages of joint solving of problems as opposed to individual struggle.	POTEKOLE (to unite)
Working in a group, listening and talking. Rules for group work. Dynamic development of a group.	CHITA TANDE (to convene)
Drawing up a plan of action to reach the desired goal.	WOUT (way)
Aids for achieving one's goal. What types of resources are there? What information is missing? Where can one obtain help?	RIVE (to arrive)

Subject area **respect and self-respect:** Although women in Haiti play an important role in society and the economy, the predominant image of women — easily recognisable from Haitian proverbs — is negative. In this subject area the women should analyse what effect this negative attitude towards women has on their own view of themselves and how they can overcome the consequences. Leading Haitian women and their struggle for equality are pointed out.

Content	*Word*
The small but decisive contribution of women's work. Significance of work for the survival of the family.	DEGAJE (to job)
The woman as pillar of the family.	POTOMITAN (pillar)

Content	*Word*
Image of woman in society. Strengths and weaknesses of women. Leading female personalities in Haitian history	FANM VANYAN FANM FENYAN (courageous woman, disheartened woman)
International Women's Day. Worldwide women's movement.	UIT MAS (March 8)

Subject area **reproduction:** This subject area comprises all themes concerning relationships, sexuality, pregnancy, birth etc. The woman should have the opportunity to get to know their bodies better in order to have more control over family planning. The important role of women in the area of health care is discussed as well as the problem of women being superseded in this area by modern medicine.

Content	*Word*
Relationship between man and woman. Legal foundations.	FE ZAFE (relationship)
Violence towards women. Violence at work and in relationships	KENBE (to rape)
Menstruation and pregnancy. Number of children and health.	GWOSES (pregnancy)
Contraception and abortion.	DILATASYON (abortion)
Venereal disease and protection. Protection from AIDS.	PREKOSYN (to prevent)
Responsibility of parents for family planning and for upbringing of children.	RESKONSAB (responsible)

Subject area **participation**: This area is concerned with the participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of society. Balance of power is analysed and the rights of women. Women should form their own ideas on development and draw up strategies for putting them into practice.

Content	*Word*
Division of power between women and men. What power do women have?	POUVWA (power)
What laws can women appeal to?	LALWA (law)
What parts of the new constitution are important to women?	KONSTITISYON (constitution)
How are elections organised? What influence does the population have on politics?	ELEKSYON (to elect)
What does development mean? What type of development do we want in our community?	DEVELOPMAN (development)
Forms of organisation for putting develop- into practice.	TETANSANM (together)

Evaluation of the project

Group dynamics

The participating groups differed considerably with respect to interest, cooperation, dynamics and attendance. One common feature shared by all women was the iron will to learn to read and write and the subsequent hope that their problems would then be solved.

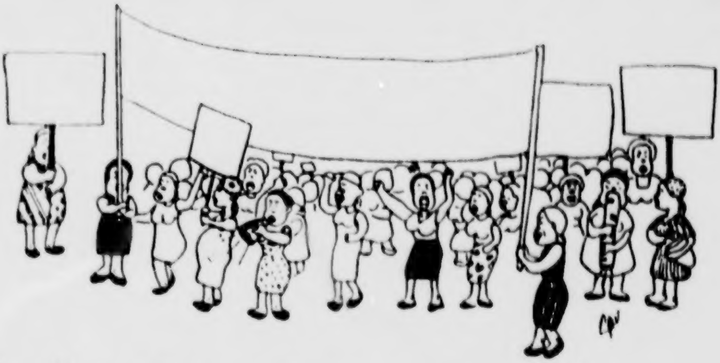
At the beginning of the project, their interests were very individual; each person wanted to gain the most personal profit from the course. During the classes a feeling of trust emerged and the readiness to try something out together; perhaps the insight as well that it is easier to seek a solution to problems together.

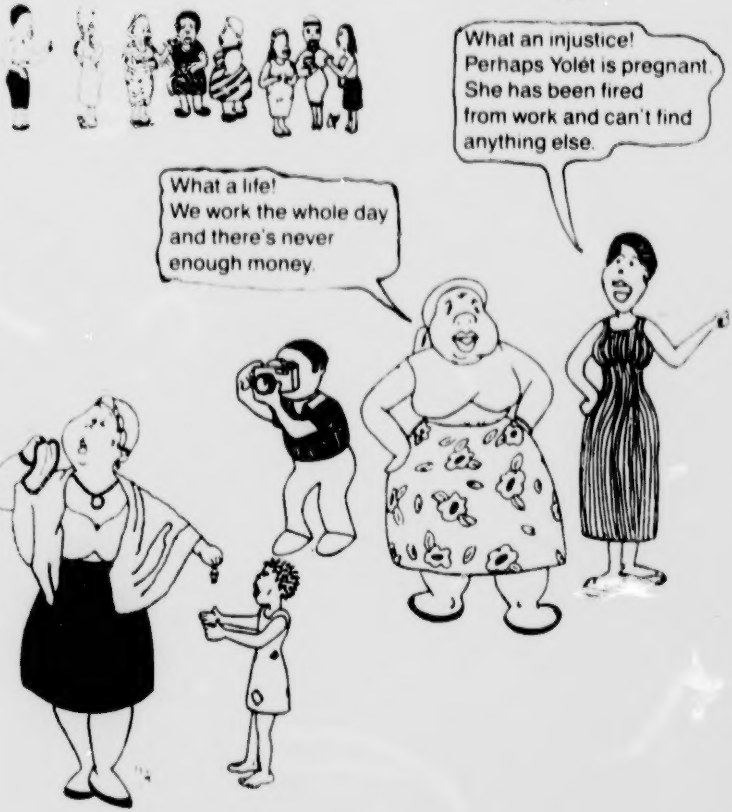
The ideal occasion for the first joint »test of courage« eventuated on March 8, 1987, women's international day, which was also celebrated in Haiti. On this day many national organisations arranged events and thanks to the intensive publicity work of many newly established women's groups, practically the whole population was informed about it.

Two of the project groups in particular became involved in the day's festivities. The Port-au-Prince group wrote a small play entitled »Tetansanm« (together). It was about a woman who encouraged fellow women to join her in opening up a small business with their collective capital. The business runs well, the women make a small profit and they leave the stage dancing and singing. This approx. 5 minute play was performed within the framework of a larger event and was greeted enthousiastically by the audience — although, or even perhaps because of the fact that, in their excitement, they forgot the text of the final song.

The group of rural women also went to a great deal of effort in organising a lovely festival for their village and visitors from surrounding districts. They had learnt dances and written plays and poems on the situation of rural women.

On the day before the festival the school director refused to let them have the hall which he had previously promised. The women were not prepared however to be robbed of **their** festival and without a moment's hesitation they stormed the school building and forced the director to hand over the key. The festival was a great success.




What an injustice! Perhaps Yolét is pregnant. She has been fired from work and can't find anything else.
What a life! We work the whole day and there's never enough money.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In both groups these experiences helped to build up the self-confidence of the women.

Although more attention has been given to problems surrounding literacy work with women in recent times, there is still a lack of initiative aimed at changing women's situation. The initiative should be grasped and developed by women themselves so that they have their development in their own hands.

The concept introduced here is coupled with the hope that reading and writing skills will be used as a tool; as a tool in securing a dignified human existence for women and thus for all people. Such a tool however can only function in a context where the social and political conditions, essential for a development linked to the well-being of man, exist.

This is a shortened version of a paper which was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Edmonton, Alberta, in May 1987. The author's association with the National Literacy Campaign of Zimbabwe began with consultations with the National Literacy Campaign Task Force of the Zimbabwe Government in 1983; several subsequent visits to Zimbabwe followed.

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H.S. Bhola

Adult literacy for development in Zimbabwe: The third phase of the revolution examined

Political independence came to Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980. That day marked the end of the first phase of the revolutionary struggle. The second phase of the revolution would be economic independence. But there was also to be the third phase of the revolution that would seek to the emanicipation of the mind. The **Transitional National Development Plan** of the Republic of Zimbabwe published in November 1982 clearly saw literacy as the instrument for the emancipation of the mind.

The Plan promised a massive **campaign** to liquidate illiteracy from among the 2.5 million adult illiterates and semi-literates out of the estimated population of some 7.5 million people at the time of independence.

A campaign is launched

The National Literacy Campaign of Zimbabwe was launched by Comrade Prime Minister Robert G. Mugabe on July 16, 1983 as what has come to be known as the Mudzi Declaration on »Literacy for All in Five Years.« The Prime Minister called it a historic day. He called the literacy campaign a campaign »to set the mind free.« Freedom, he asserted, meant little unless the people were mentally emancipated; and their mind is not free if it is illiterate and innumerate.

He promised new infrastructures that would mobilize the state and the people for the implementation of the literacy campaign: a national coordinating council at the centre, followed by provincial coordinating committees, district coordinating committees, and village development committees. At the village level, there would be village development centres where literacy groups would meet. The Prime Minister had conceptualized a literacy campaign for the people, by the people. »Every Government Ministry, non-Government organization, the private sector and indeed all literate people should organize themselves into brigades to fight illiteracy and to wipe it out within the next five years,« he exhorted. It is significant to note that much of the work for the campaign was to be »voluntary.«

The technology of the literacy campaign

Along the technological dimension, the Zimbabwean National Literacy Campaign was undoubtedly well planned. A great fund of knowledge and experience in literacy promotion in different socio-economic settings had in fact become available during the 1960s and the 1970s. The planners of the Zimbabwean National Literacy Campaign were able to visit literacy campaigns and programmes of many different countries in Asia and Africa for some first-hand experience. The head of the reputedly successful adult literacy campaign in Tanzania, Z.P. Mpogolo, spent six months in Harare helping Zimbabwean colleagues in the development and design of strategies for implementation of the campaign to be launched in Zimbabwe.

Coverage by the campaign during 1983 – 86

One of the plans for national coverage, considered during the earliest period of the campaign had, rather optimistically, developed the following projections:

Year			
1983 – 84	1984 – 85	1985 – 86	1986 – 87
Participants to be covered			
200,000	500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000

In reality, the figures recently released by the Government of Zimbabwe are as follows:

Year	*Total learners enrolled*	*Male / female ratio*
1983	90,052	1 : 5
1984	117,461	1 : 6
1985	105,203	1 : 6
1986	82,138	1 : 5
Total	394,854	1 : 5

Understandably, all those concerned with the campaign are talking about the »loss of momentum« in the campaign and of the need for its revitalization.

Some evaluations of the campaign

Some evaluations of the Zimbabwean National Literacy Campaign have since become available and are summarized below.

An evaluation of learners' achievement was conducted by the Ministry of Education during May–June 1985. The Ministry of Education invited all learners who had participated in the campaign to come to be tested during a pre-determined week. Only 35,000 (about 11 per cent of the total cumulative enrollment during 1983–85) showed up. This low level of attendance is explained by the fact that the national test competed with the agricultural cycle and a national election. Of those who took the test, 27,000 (some 77 per cent) were declared successful. Learners needed to score 50 per cent to be declared successful and most of the 27,000 who passed may have been semi-literate rather than fully literate. Unlike Tanzania, whose national literacy tests provided the model, the Zimbabwe testing failed to make any mobilizational use of the testing event. The Party took no interest in the testing nor did local leadership. Indeed, the testing may have led to frustration among those who did take the tests, as the certificates were sent out late and many to the wrong addresses. Another nation-wide test is planned for 1988.

A study conducted by Ines Grainger found potential for reorientation in both the objectives and processes of the campaign. Literacy, she suggested, had become an affair for women. Men preferred to drink beer rather than attend classes. The programme did not seem to meet learners' objectives which were to acquire academic knowledge to enter the formal economy. They did not want functional literacy. Perhaps they could be convinced otherwise but the programme as presently run taught neither functionality nor academic literacy effectively. Tutors failed to inspire their learners since they were themselves seen as social and economic failures.

In a deeper political analysis of adult literacy in Zimbabwe, Davison suggests that the regime may have indeed abandoned its policy of »growth with equity« promulgated in the first few years of independence. Naturally, therefore, universalization of adult literacy was no longer on its agenda. She suspects also that the power elite in Zimbabwe may not be willing to release women from the cultural (and legal) bondage in which they live and since women are the main beneficiaries of the campaign, the male power establishment may not be too serious in making literacy succeed.

The ideology of the literacy campaign

It is quite clear from the foregoing description and evaluations that the National Literacy Campaign of Zimbabwe has lost momentum and is indeed in need of revitalization, otherwise it will peter out completely. It can also be asserted that the cause for the present condition of the campaign does not lie in its technology which is more than adequate, but in its ideology which today is less than stimulating. The campaign when it was first launched in July 1983, did seem to have had the right ideological roots. The language of justification for literacy promotion used in the Prime Minister's speech sounded right for a political elite committed to developing a socialist and egalitarian society. However, the ideological drift from revolution to reform was already there for the perceptive to see. Looking back, the ideological drift should be clear to anyone willing to ponder.

Political culture and literacy strategy: Posing a theoretical relationship

Elsewhere, I have proposed a political theory of literacy promotion. I have suggested that there is a discernable dialectical relationship between a nation's political culture and the literacy promotion strategy that a nation would normally choose. The following graphic representation of the model delineates these relationships:

Motivational-Developmental Model		*Planned Development Model*		*Structural-Developmental Model*
Gradualist	...	Reformist	...	Revolutionary
Organic growth	...	Growth with efficiency	...	Growth with equity
Project approach to literacy	...	Programme approach to literacy	...	Campaign approach to literacy

The categories along each continuum in the model above are not discrete but should be seen as interpenetrating each other. Again, the various points on the parallel continua are not meant to be seen in perfect vertical integration. The model should, nonetheless, help us to understand how political cultures and strategies of development and literacy promotion stand in dialectical relationship to each other, with particular partialities and propensities.

As ideal types, the nations following the motivational-developmental model are basically conservative, even reactionary. They look at growth and change as an organic process, expecting the individual to aspire, become motivated, and to obtain his or her share of social goods. Structures, if not neutral, are seen as amenable to change under emergent pressure from the newly motivated. Nations following this model are in no hurry to change their socio-economic realities. They believe in gradual social transformation without social disruptions. Literacy is seldom a governmental priority. When it is given consideration, justifications for literacy promotion are found in religion, patriotism and productivity. Literacy initiatives typically end up supporting professionalization of labour in the context of functional literacy projects tied to small- and medium-scale economic projects.

At the other end of the continuum are the nations following the structural-developmental model. These are revolutionary societies which may draw strength from varied sources of nationalism, populism or marxism. The focus is on changing structures which determine the rules of the political and economic game. Within the newly established structures, citizens are motivated to participate in the new political, social and economic institutions. Typically, these societies claim egalitarian and democratic ideologies of some sort. Their developmental agenda is growth with equity. Literacy is central to their plans for both modernization and democratization and the strategy of literacy promotion is almost always the campaign involving high political passion, and popular mobilization.

Somewhere in the middle of this continuum are societies that can be seen as following the planned development model. These societies as ideal types do want to change structures but wish to keep the dynamics of change under the planners' control. The masses are invited to participate in the implementation of the outcomes planned by the power elite. These societies can be best described as reformist. Growth and equity are sought to be kept in an efficient balance so as not to create economic malaise or social conflict. Both formal education and nonformal education are seen as necessary for promoting modernization and democratization. The favourite strategy of literacy promotion of such societies seems to be a national literacy programme, which may be nationwide but which is often under bureaucratic control and is lacking in the crusading and combative spirit of a literacy campaign.

The above model should help us understand the nature and path of the ideological drift in Zimbabwe from the structural-developmental model to the planned development model. With this drift, the concern for growth with equity may have begun to change into growth with efficiency and, quite obviously, the literacy campaign has become a literacy programme at best and may be in danger of becoming fragmented into a multiplicity of small projects.

Mobilization in the context of demobilization

An interesting and significant fact is often missed by analysts of the Zimbabwe literacy initiative. It is the fact that mobilization for literacy was planned in the general context of a **de**mobilization of the nation. The mobilization for the literacy campaign, basically through District Literacy Coordinators (DLC's) who were all ex-combatants, might have succeeded, except that there were opposite and stronger pulls in operation at the same time. While mobilization for literacy was to begin, the nation had been through a successful demobilization of the armies that had fought the white Rhodesian regime. The incentives were for change from the underground to the establishment, from the cadre to the functionary, from the guerilla to the career-oriented wage earner or shop keeper. No wonder the DLC's failed to generate a literacy movement and the Voluntary Literacy Teachers kept on asking for honoraria for the work done.

The nature of the present political culture

Zimbabwe today is caught in the paradox of socialism in partnership with capitalism. There is a duality in the society and the economy and, therefore, in the development strategy. Interest in literacy has fallen between the cracks of the dual strategy of the new Five Year Plan which shows little interest in literacy promotion. Understandably — and here there is no paradox — the orientation of the national system of education is towards manpower development for the formal economic sector. Nonformal education and adult literacy are seen as mere frills.

The existing plans, actions, incentives and rewards have socialized the present generation of the young as entrepreneurs and competitors, not as egalitarian cooperators. The recent draught, failure in the Unity talks with John Nkomo, the uncertainties on the border with South Africa all suggest that revolutionary gambles should be avoided.

From ideological drift to political design

It remains a practical possibility for Zimbabwe to conduct a successful national literacy campaign if the political elite at the highest level show interest and come out openly in favour of the campaign. There is no reason why the Prime Minister cannot demand that the Party take the responsibility to mobilize the learners to learn and the teachers to teach. There is no reason why the 320,000 secondary school students and over 100,000 primary and secondary school teachers in full employment of the government cannot be sent to the villages and asked to teach literacy. There is no reason why resources cannot be made available to the Ministry of Education and to the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs to implement a national initiative and show results. There is no reason why instructional materials used in the programme cannot serve multiple functional purposes to change the lives of farmers, workers and housewives in the formal and **informal** sectors of economic development.

Lessons for Zimbabwe

Political power in Zimbabwe is in the hands of a group of intelligent and committed people who have been hardened first by the armed struggle and then by the designs of the enemy within and the enemy without. Their policies remain pro-people. They are seriously committed to creating a society of fairness and freedom. But they have to face up to the fact that the historical compromise made at Lancaster House has removed some important options. Distributive justice has to wait because what is to be distributed is not immediately available. The continued use of revolutionary rhetoric may mystify people in the short run but cannot hide the reformist mode of social transformation for ever. An appropriate change in the language of discourse may indeed clarify development discussion.

The politicians and policy makers in Zimbabwe also need to learn that political will does not grow in a vacuum. It has to be planted in the proper ideological soil and has to be continuously nurtured to be sustained. Related to this is the idea that mobilization is a political process led by political actors; it is more than bureaucratization and inter-departmental coordination.

Professor Michael Omolewa is the Head of the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has been a reader and contributor to this journal for more than a decade now. In the letter accompanying his manuscript he wrote:
»I look forward to sharing views with your increasingly alert readership on the topical issue of literacy that is understandably dear to our heart. Thank you for establishing this medium for exchange and information.«

Michael Omolewa

On the intractable question of literacy campaigns in Nigeria

Introduction

The issue of wiping out illiteracy in Nigeria has constituted as much a problem — possibly a disease — as the problem of illiteracy itself. Indeed, the problem has gradually become perennial and is almost acquiring a resistance to all prescribed solutions. After three earlier efforts to eliminate illiteracy, the percentage of illiterate people in the country now seems to have increased.

On May 1, 1988, a mass literacy campaign, the fourth in the history of Nigerian education, was quietly launched in Nigeria from the Abuja Headquarters of the newly established Directorate for Social Mobilisation. It is important to note that three earlier campaigns, launched respectively in 1944, 1974 and 1982, had failed woefully. In this paper an attempt is made to examine the circumstances for the failure of the earlier campaigns and to assess the fortunes of the latest exercise. The aim is to identify the major factors which have limited performance in the drive to eradicate illiteracy in Africa's most populous country.

In the process, we wish to address the issue of the approaches to literacy work, and the initiatives at all levels of society. The historical method adopted here is also the one most familiar to this author. In an attempt to analyse the past, one has had recourse to the invaluable material in the archives, and the mine of information unleashed by interviews conducted with several adult educators that had been involved with the various phases of work discussed in this paper.

It is hoped that this contribution will be helpful as the world looks forward to the International Literacy Year when many nations are probably tempted to launch mass literacy campaigns and pledges to wipe out illiteracy. It is perhaps needless to mention that most of the input in this paper is valid for the majority of Third World countries.

Project of political leadership

We must note from the outset that only a committed political leadership can successfully wage a campaign against illiteracy by mobilising all human and material resources at its disposal. For a campaign is, as its name suggests, a war. For Nigeria, it has constantly been a war to convince the political leadership of the value of a literate majority. In the process, it was not until a report on the value of mass education was presented in 1943 by a committee of the Colonial Office in London that Nigerian political leadership began to consider mass literacy as a veritable tool for development. A document entitled *Mass Education in African Society* published that year had argued, forcefully, that real social and economic development will inevitably exlude a society with an illiterate majority. By the beginning of 1944 the Nigerian colonial administration had decided to respond to the challenges of post-war Nigeria by embarking on a mass education programme which would also eliminate illiteracy from Nigeria. Pilot projects were promptly begun in June 1944 by education officers and district officers at Ibadan in Western Nigeria and at Udi in Eastern Nigeria. With the appointment of Major A.J. Carpenter by the Central Government in 1946, literacy work was extended to Katsina in Northern Nigeria and to Egbado, Ekiti and Owerri divisions in Southern Nigeria. Adult education thenceforth had an annual budget. The period from 1946 to 1956 may thus be described as the first of the mass literacy campaigns in Nigeria. The campaign failed because government commitment was half-hearted, and because it was a campaign only in name.

It will surprise impartial observers of the literacy effort that the newly independent government of Nigeria did not list the elimination of illiteracy among its priorities in 1960. The point is that the Nigerian educated elite benefitted from an illiterate citizenry who were uninformed and thus uncritical of government decisions. Adult education was thus ignored by the post-Independence political leadership.

Advocacy for mass literacy for Nigerians had however continued, assisted by the establishment of an Institute of African Adult Education at the University of Ibadan in 1965 by UNESCO and the subsequent inauguration of annual Functional Literacy Seminars by that institution as from 1971. Furthermore, there was a general agreement by the Nigerian educated elite that illiteracy was worth combatting after the attainment of political freedom. To this end, a Nigerian National Council for Adult Education was established in 1971 partly to exert pressure on the country's political leadership in considering the issue of the liquidation of illiteracy. In response to these pressures, the Federal Commissioner for Education, Chief A.Y. Eke, requested the Nigerian Council, during his celebrated address at Kano to the Council's first annual conference, to embark on a ten year literacy campaign as from April 1, 1974. The campaign proved a failure even before it took off.

Yet the argument persisted that illiteracy is a disease. Attention was drawn to the monumental economic and technological advancement of the European and American countries which had a mass literate population. It was further argued that there could have been no Nkrumah or an Awolowo or a Nyerere if literacy skills had been denied these astute leaders. It was further noted that the ability of political leadership in discerning problems and understanding complex issues was dependent on the level of exposure to, and use of, literacy. Put simply, literacy was perceived as a source of empowerment, a tool for obtaining access to information, knowledge, ideas and thus an increased understanding of issues. It was contended that a literate can often communicate with both the living as well as the dead, by reading and explaining ideas in the written word.

This was the background to the decision of the Federal Government and a number of State governments to launch the third literacy campaign on the evening of September 8, 1982. The campaign, also proposed for a ten year period, can be described, midterm, as a colossal failure.

Even then, the convinced Nigerian educated elite has remained relentless in suggesting that the best way to approach development problems would be through the elimination of illiteracy and the subsequent involvement of more heads and hands in providing a cure to the development issues in the country. It is argued that Africa had succeeded in producing a Desmond Tutu, the 1984 Nobel Peace Winner and Wole Soyinka, the 1986 Nobel Laureate in Literature because literacy was not denied these worthy sons of Africa. Against this background, the Nigerian military government has established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure and the Directorate of Social Mobilisation which have both decided to pursue the issue of the mass literacy campaign.

The argument of those who have persistently urged the introduction of a mass literacy campaign in Nigeria has not been faulted at government level. Indeed those in the area of development recommend that literacy may solve problems of suspicion, ethnic chauvinism and religious bigotry in the country. Advocates of political stability have further suggested that a literate society would be an unlikely field for electoral manipulators and perennial coup plotters.

The new campaign by the Directorates in Nigeria has the potential for success, for it is designed to respond to the needs of the people, especially those in rural areas. It also seeks to introduce change in values and attitudes and to provide skills for the attainment of self-reliance. We may proceed to measure its potential for success by analysing the status of the earlier campaigns that had succeeded in places such as Cuba, Tanzania, Nicaragua and Ethiopia.

Inevitability of failure

We should recall that the first mass literacy campaign in Nigeria was well planned. It had projections and full documentation. Carpenter had used his experience in the army to advantage, planning and implementing his programmes with ruthless efficiency. He dismissed lazy officials on-the-spot and took the preparation of material seriously. Unfortunately the colonial government which he served, was by no means anxious to eliminate illiteracy. Carpenter was frustrated by the unsteady attitude of government and had to retire in 1952 at the age of 45. Similarly, F.A.O. Akomolede, another official, left adult education work in 1953 'in search of greener pastures'. The campaign therefore failed, not because of poor planning, but because of poor execution. The political leadership was not seriously-minded: it was therefore not prepared for a campaign.

In 1974, the Nigerian National Council and the Commissioner for Education grossly underestimated the strength of the illiteracy problem. The Council also did not have the resources to carry out a campaign. Again, the second campaign had an in-built mechanism for failure. Unlike the earlier campaign, however, there were no resignations since there were no recruitments.

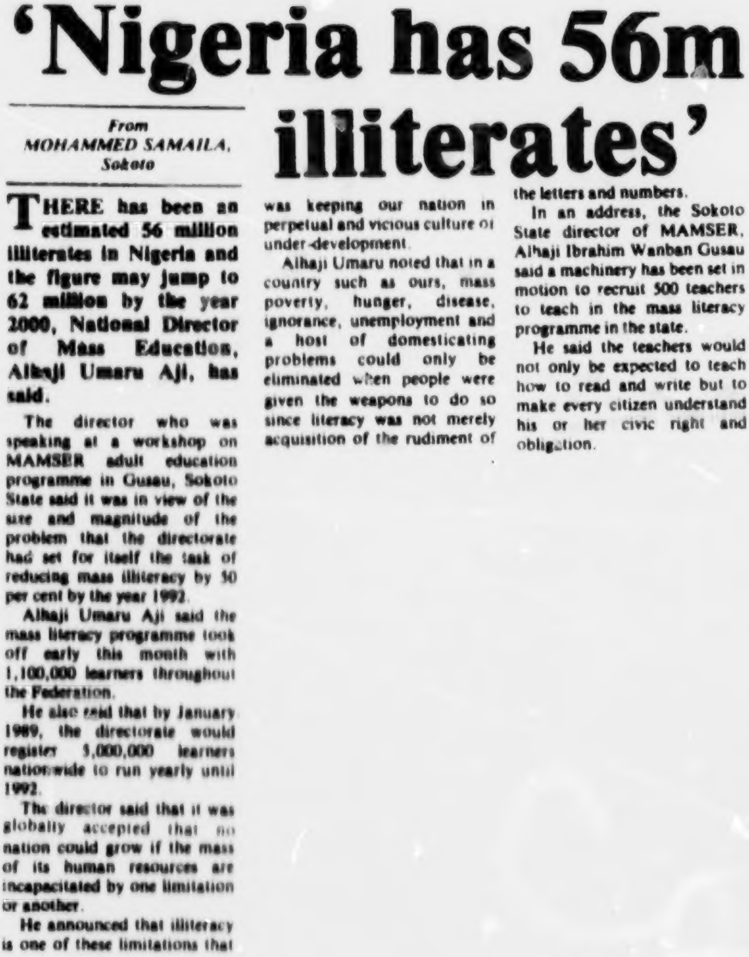
The third literacy campaign was launched on the evening of September 8, 1982. The timing itself was ill-advised as serious campaigns are normally launched at dawn. Thus there was no guarantee of success. It is true that some equipment in the form of typewriters were supplied and a handful of field-staff trained. But the campaign ran into an ambush very early on as the return to political rule brought the usual bitterness and rancour that suffocated the campaign — many State governments ignored the campaign.

The way forward

One major set-back in the current campaign which commenced in May 1988 is the absence of reliable security report needed for proper planning. It is regrettable that the country does not know the number of illiterates and their location. Nor is it aware of the real literacy needs of the people. A blind offensive may therefore be waged on an unidentified enemy target. The predictable consequence would, of course, be the disarray, the disgrace and the accompanying shattering defeat. Another flaw in the present arrangement is the absence of a concerted appeal to allies, including genuinely concerned international organisations, for help. It is good that the United Nations has designated 1990 as the International Literacy Year. In spite of this cheering development however, it is obvious that educational and development allies will still have to be courted. It is true, of course, that most of the countries that are in a position to help are busy investing their resources in defence. Nevertheless, the attention of literacy-developed countries should still be drawn to the illiterate region of the world.

It must be remembered that the forces of illiteracy as an enemy in Nigeria have further strengthened by the alarming population growth in the country, the fall in school attendance, the biting economic crisis and frustrating oil glut, as well as the emerging despair and discouragement among adult educators who now doubt if a solution to reducing illiteracy can be found.

The situation does not, however, defy all solution. Now that some political will is evident — the two established Directorates are located in the Office of the President and Head of State — what is needed is concentrated action truthfully reflecting the status of a campaign, not a friendly skirmish or flirting with illiteracy. In the process, urgent action is needed in establishing a National Adult Education Commission as prescribed in the nation's *Policy on Education* (1977) to coordinate all activities in the country and assist State Agencies. For it is clear that only coordinated, spontaneous and sustained action can assist in the eradication of illiteracy. It is only under these circumstances that Nigeria can have a success story.



'Nigeria has 56m illiterates'

From
MOHAMMED SAMAILA,
Sokoto

THERE has been an estimated 56 million illiterates in Nigeria and the figure may jump to 62 million by the year 2000, National Director of Mass Education, Alhaji Umaru Aji, has said.

The director who was speaking at a workshop on MAMSER adult education programme in Gusau, Sokoto State said it was in view of the size and magnitude of the problem that the directorate had set for itself the task of reducing mass illiteracy by 50 per cent by the year 1992.

Alhaji Umaru Aji said the mass literacy programme took off early this month with 1,100,000 learners throughout the Federation.

He also said that by January 1989, the directorate would register 5,000,000 learners nationwide to run yearly until 1992.

The director said that it was globally accepted that no nation could grow if the mass of its human resources are incapacitated by one limitation or another.

He announced that illiteracy is one of these limitations that was keeping our nation in perpetual and vicious culture of under-development.

Alhaji Umaru noted that in a country such as ours, mass poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance, unemployment and a host of domesticating problems could only be eliminated when people were given the weapons to do so since literacy was not merely acquisition of the rudiment of the letters and numbers.

In an address, the Sokoto State director of MAMSER, Alhaji Ibrahim Wanban Gusau said a machinery has been set in motion to recruit 500 teachers to teach in the mass literacy programme in the state.

He said the teachers would not only be expected to teach how to read and write but to make every citizen understand his or her civic right and obligation.

aus: National Concord, 14.5.1988

This paper was presented to a regional workshop on »Literacy and Second Language Teaching with Special Reference to Creole Languages« organized by the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults / CAETA; a press release about the workshop is published in this journal. Here we present a shortened version of Didacus Jules' paper; for a full copy, please write to him at the National Research and Development Foundation, St. Lucia, Caribbean.

Didacus Jules

Literacy in St. Lucia: The status of Kweyol in St. Lucia

Kweyol in St. Lucia has been one of the most unyielding victims of social prejudice and unenlightened dogma than perhaps any other social phenomenon in our national history. As early as 1844 when bigots put pen to paper, *Kweyol* — otherwise known as *Patois;* disparagingly referred to as *Broken French, Negro Language,* or *Creole Jargon* — has been maligned.

It is evident that St. Lucia and Kweyol-speaking St. Lucians have suffered as a result of the absence of a language policy that gives formal recognition and an equitable space to the reality of Kweyol. But the problem of language is not simply an educational dilemma, it is eventually a matter of political will — to what extent is the political leadership of the country prepared to promote this formal acceptance and its democratic implications?

In the absence of such policy definitions there is much that has been done in St. Lucia to change the status of Kweyol. The wave of nationalist social consciousness that swept the Caribbean in the 1970s did much to change popular conceptions of culture and to affirm in a new generation of Carribbean people, a pride in things indigenous. This ideological shift in popular perception was reinforced and given an empirical validity by the pioneering work done by Caribbean linguists like Carrington, Craig, Alleyne *et al.* in describing the origins, structure and content of our Creoles.

Illiteracy and Kweyol

The assumption that the language is the cause of illiteracy in St. Lucia has been a historical though misguided belief. Carrington[1] informs that the last official census which sought to ascertain the level of illiteracy in St. Lucia was the 1946 Census which revealed that 44.8% of those 10 years & over were illiterate in a population of which 43.4% were Creole monolinguals. It is therefore true that there is a close statistical correspondence between the extent of Creole monolingualism and illiteracy. Community based studies conducted by the Literacy Pilot Project (LPP) during the period 1984 - 1986 confirm that **all Creole monolinguals are illiterate; but not all illiterate persons are Creole monolinguals.** Creole monolinguals are illiterate, not because Kweyol is a natural progenitor of illiteracy, but simply because no educational provision was ever made at a national level in St. Lucia either for literacy in Kweyol or for the teaching of English as a second language. On the other hand, the limited information available suggests that those bilingual St. Lucians who are illiterate are in this condition as a result of one of several possible factors:

a) **limited or poor quality formal instruction** — in many cases less than five or six years formal schooling intermittently received (attendance at school irregular or having to leave school at an early age to earn a livelihood or assist with domestic responsibilities);

b) **lack of use of English literacy skills** — often combined with limited schooling resulting in a loss of the skill;

c) **inadequate mastery/understanding of English** — elderly learners in the LPP have cited this as a major factor influencing their ability to read and write.

In October 1979, a Committee headed by Dr. Lawrence Carrington which was appointed by the Ministry of Education to prepare a feasibility study for a national literacy programme, concluded after exhaustive extrapolation from several sources of data that the level of illiteracy in St. Lucia was »*in the vicinity of 46% of the population over age 15, or approximately 30,000 individuals … distribut*[ed] *islandwide*«[2] What proportion of the 30,000 illiterates were monolingual was not determined but the Committee unequivocally urged that Creole be supported and recognised as an official means of communication and that a bilingual education and communication policy be adopted by the government. Comprehensive consideration was given to prevailing social attitudes to Kweyol and the Committee confessed that some ambivalence existed in the public mind.

Almost five years later however, the research carried out by the LPP revealed no equivocation in learners' attitude towards the language. In response to the question »*In which language would* *you like to learn to read, write and count?«*, the majority from the two communities surveyed responded *»Both*. Their actual responses to this question are most revealing:

Ti Rocher: 56% — Both languages
39% — English only
5% — Kweyol only

La Guerre: 61% — Both languages
32% — English only
4% — Kweyol only[3]

In both Ti Rocher and La Guerre, the majority response in favour of literacy in both languages is a clear statement that rural (if not most) St. Lucians understand the bilingual nature of our society and, while wanting to achieve literacy in English (the language of the law, business, mobility and opportunity) also wish to preserve the cultural integrity of their native language by learning to read and write in it.

It is unfortunate that the opportunity was not taken during the pilot phase of the Literacy Programme here to take up the challenge posed by these responses and initiate bilingual literacy education in St. Lucia. Again ambivalence and the absence of a decisive policy was a major constraint faced by the Planning Team which opted instead for the compromise option outlined in the 1980 Feasability Report: the use of Kweyol as the language of instruction to achieve literacy in English. This approach entailed new and slightly different challenges.

Literacy method in a Creole Context

Research conducted in several territories of the region led Craig to assert that *»English is neither a native language nor a foreign language«*.[4]

It is important to note that Craig's work centered on Standard English and lexically related Creoles (in this specific case, Jamaican English), however it is useful to reflect on some of his methodological conclusions and to ask how relevant some of them may be to the acquisition of literacy in a situation where there is no lexical relationship between the native and target languages.

With the proviso that the aim of English teaching, in the St. Lucia context, should be — not the replacement of the learners' native language — but the provision of the facility to switch to Standard English in situations requiring it, the guidelines suggested form part of the approach to English literacy in the LPP.

The LPP defined the behavioural specifications of functional literacy competencies that should be achieved by the St. Lucian learner in a document called »*Scope, Sequence & Syllabi for Adult St. Lucian Learners*«. The specific language and learner performance objectives described were modifications of the product of a contrastive analysis prepared by the OAS, for the St. Lucia context. This document therefore bases itself on the premise that a bilingual approach is essential and that the process must necessarily begin from the language, experience and culture of the adult learner. This involves:

a) **an acceptance and use of the Kweyol as the medium of communication and instruction** — the acceptance of the mother tongue of the adult learner is an authentic act of respect for the integrity of the learner. It affirms that in his/her language, the learner has a cultural resource that can facilitate the learning process and that his/her natural medium of communication can constitute the starting point for self-expression in another familiar language.

b) **the appropriation of the experience of the adult learner** as a vital component of the content of learning. This too affirms the integrity of the adult learner. Guided by the principle of making life the content of education, we make learning an immediate process of reflection on previous experience and creative reformulation of future options. By doing this we say, not in theory but in the practise of our work, that we as literacy practitioners and humanist educators do not assume the right to define for adults what the content of their education should be. If we accept that adults come to such classes of their own volition and with their own motivating reasons, then the responsibility is ours to discover what these personal learning agendas are and to seek to address them. In a real sense too, the use of Kweyol as a medium of instruction implicitly requires a corresponding change in the form and content of educational process; and the basis of this correspondence is the cultural and social milieu from which the Kweyol has sprung.

This premise also conforms to an important pedagogical principle, that of starting from the known to get to the unknown, beginning with the familiar to understand the unfamiliar.

c) **an emphasis on orality in the learning of English** — whether it be for learners whose understanding of English is rudimentary, or for those seeking to develop a greater command of the English language, concentrated emphasis is placed on oral comprehension and expression. These we consider to be the two sides of a very valuable coin. Given the socio-linguistic status and historical prejudices associated with monolingualism in Kweyol in St. Lucia, one can appreciate how important it is to help the monolingual assimilate English by expression of his/her own experiences first in Kweyol and then in English with increasing sophistication to approximate the Kweyol expression. In philosophical terms it represents a movement away from the 'culture of silence' that confronted the monolingual on contact with situations requiring responses in English to self-confident and self-assertive expression. This can only be achieved, not through methods of mechanical mimicry, but those that nurture oral comprehension and self-expression.

The benefits derived from this approach have been articulated by adult learners from the literacy centres. Learners from Grande Riviere, for example, in a discussion on the work of their centre provided their own assessment of the approach:

- they stated that the use of Kweyol for discussion followed by English has helped them to cover areas of difficulty with greater ease, e.g. the teaching of measurement was greatly facilitated by discussion of traditional units in Kweyol followed by the equation of these units in English;
- several learners who reported that, at the time of registration in the classes, they were unable to understand English and to express themselves in the language, indicated that the exercises in listening, sound discrimination, and oral comprehension were invaluable aids in developing a better oral competence in English. One learner said that, as a result he has become more sensitive in the art of listening *»when you talk, I listen to you and to how you say things when you speak in English«*.

When asked to describe what was the most memorable and rewarding class they ever attended in the programme, the responses of virtually all of the learners described classes that were concerned with practical and immediate issues, often suggested by the learners themselves. Some of the responses given included:

- *»learning to fill out bank slips, reading my bank book and how to do business at the bank«* (role plays; actual bank slips and learners' passbooks were used);

- *»filling out passport forms and learning to answer questions in other forms about your name, age, address and things like that«;*

- *»learning to count* (in multiples), *to use the calculator, and to write numbers in numbers* (numerals) *and in words and to be able to count in Kweyol and English«;*

- *»learning to write letters, how to write them, how to say things in letters and how it is important to read back* (re-read) *my letters to correct mistakes«.*

In all of these cases, learners were gratified because what they had learned in the particular class had previously been a source of embarrassment or a felt handicap.

Where do we go from here?

While it should be evident that a great deal of work has been done in recent times on the language issue in St. Lucia and, to a lesser extent on literacy, it should be borne in mind that these efforts are directed against linguistic prejudices whose origins are rooted in our very history and against an educational and social deficit (illiteracy) whose scale is too great to be tackled by mere palliatives.

The valiant initiative represented by the Literacy Pilot Project, notwithstanding the innovations of method and approach, is severely hamstrung by the absence of experimentation on Kweyol literacy and **its reach is severely circumscribed by the lack of a determined political will** which would, in the words of an elderly learner, sow the seeds of this programme all over the length and breadth of St. Lucia. Even with the anticipated peak of enrollment to 1,000 learners with the opening of new centres on the Roseau Valley, only one-thirtieth of the target population would have been reached.

For the immediate future therefore we are faced with four imperatives for action:

The first of these is the political challenge of establishing a truly national literacy programme, transcending partisan political and other sectarian distinctions, through which the St. Lucian people could be aroused to work together to achieve the desirable developmental objective of eradicating illiteracy from our land.

The second challenge is for increased scientific and action oriented research on second language learning in St. Lucia.

The third challenge is for the commencement (having now an acceptable orthography) experimentation in achieving Kweyol literacy. This will pave the way for the development of bilingual models, help to effect big quantitative and qualitative changes in public attitudes to the language and ultimately benefit the entire educational system.

Finally, there is the challenge of incorporating cultural elements in adult literacy work in a more fundamental way than simply seeking some 'exotic' relevance. We need to rediscover the elements and the pedagogies of the oral tradition which could be syncretised into a modern and rational approach to learning. Consider, for example the psycho-linguistic as well as the pedagogical value of using the *Wapi* game (a West African game with seeds involving mathematical computations and strategising) to teach some basic mathematical concepts. Modern research has become increasingly fascinated with the functions of the left and right side of the human brain and their role in developing the rational and intuitive faculties. In this process it is discovering new truths about oral tradition and its cultivation of the intuitive. Must we await once again the findings and pronouncements of western science to find our direction or should we not consciously and rationally undertake the process that history has imposed on us —

that of syncretising and synthesising the best of the inherited to create the indigenous?

Notes

1. Carrington, L., *Literacy & Rural Development: A Look at the St. Lucian Initiative*, unpublished paper, Juni 1981, p. 5.
2. *A Report on the Feasibility of a National Literacy Programme for St. Lucia*, CRC, Nov. 1980, p. 4.
3. Jules, D., *An Analysis of the Literary Surveys of Ti Rocher and La Guerre (St. Lucia)*, NRDF/Mined. Oct. 1984.
4. Craig, D., *»Education and Creole English«*, in Hymes, D., *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, CUP 1971, p. 376.

Alan Rogers, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults, sent to us this press release about a **literacy workshop**. If you want to contact them, please write to the following address: *CAETA, School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ, England.*

The Commonwealth Assocation for the Education and Training of Adults held its first regional workshop from May 14 to 24 1988 in two eastern Caribbean islands — St. Lucia and Antigua. The workshop focused on adult literacy and second language learning with special emphasis on Creole languages. Some thirty adult educators from Canada and the Caribbean participated, two thirds of them women.

One noteworthy aspect of the workshop was its very practical orientation. Participants visited a number of community-based adult education centres in both islands and engaged in information-sharing sessions on the nature of adult literacy programmes, preparation of learner-centred materials and the utilization of English and French-based Creole languages for both educational and cultural development. Participants were particularly concerned that a regional network be set up for the exchange of information and that some governments take a more active role in recognising, promoting and funding literacy programmes that aim at engaging the mother tongue of the learner, particularly as a motivational tool.

The workshop concluded on a positive note that, with future workshops held particularly for the training of facilitators engaged in developing functional literacy skills, the very high literacy rates of many countries would in fact be a more meaningful representation of social, economic and cultural development.

Sunthorn Sunanchai was the former Deputy Director-General of the Non-Formal Education Department, Thailand. He is retired now, but still active in helping adult education associations throughout the country. This manuscript is a shortened version of an article which appeared in »Khitpen Newsletter«, vol. 6, no. 3, 1987. The Newsletter is published by the Supervisory Unit, Non-Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 10300, Thailand.
If you want to receive a full copy, please write to the editor, Dr. Tongyoo Kaewsaiha.

Sunthorn Sunanchai

Reading promotion in Thailand

Reading culture has long been established in Thai history since the invention of the Thai alphabet by King Ramkhamhaeng of the old Kingdom of Sukhothai about 700 years ago. It was, however, practised among only a small group of people, especially those concerned with the royal court and among the Buddhist monks themselves. The Thai mass began to learn literacy quite recently when the compulsory education act was passed in 1921. The Thai letter printing machine imported by Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an

American missionary, in 1936 long before mass literacy was realized, helped to speed up the distribution of reading material to the common people later on when literacy became widespread.

Thus the reading culture is still very new compared with the oral one.

Role of reading in development efforts

The problem of school leavers and literacy programme participants relapsing into illiteracy is widely known among educators. This kind of problem is serious enough because the acquisition of permanent literacy is not always possible due to the necessary investments in money and time which are beyond the capability of most developing countries.

The solution should be the following: a minimum basic level of literacy and knowledge for everybody and availability of reading opportunities for all through public libraries, community school libraries, reading centres, mobile libraries and private bookstores.

What I am trying to say is that reading plays an important role in the retention of literacy. Without continuing reading, literate persons could once again become illiterate.

Reading promotion strategies

Survey of newspaper reading

A survey of newspaper reading in Thailand was conducted by the National Statistical Office, Office of the Prime Minister in 1984. The data indicates that from 9.4 million households, 3.2 million households (34.7%) read the newspaper but 6.2 million (65.3%) do not. In other words, more than half of the total number of households in this country do not read the newspaper.

The percentage of readers at varying educational level are as follows:

No schooling	2.4%
Elementary	22.7%
Secondary	67.0%
University	96.0%
Vocational	83.5%
Teacher training	92.7%
Vocational short course	73.1%
Others	45.1%

As the above figures show, the educational background is closely related to reading practice. The lower the level of education one has, the less one is likely to read. Thus only 22.7% of the elementary group are reported to read a newspaper, while 67% of the secondary group do so.

Occupational distribution of regular newspaper readers can be seen below:

Professional, technical	91.6%
Administrative, executive, managerial	88.9%
Clerical	87.4%
Sales	51.8%
Farmers, fishermen, hunters, loggers	13.6%
Craftsmen, labourers	40.3%

It can be seen from the above figures that farmers, fishermen, hunters and loggers are those who read the least.

Another interesting figure is that among the regular newspaper readers, 49.8% bought the newspapers for their own reading while

50.2% did not. In other words, the latter sought to read in their own offices or somewhere else.

Reading promotion services

The public library system

The public library system was established in Thailand in 1950. Before that time, special libraries like the National Library, university and school libraries and private libraries offered reading services to special groups of readers.

The public library system, organized under the Division of Adult Education, comprises the following types of libraries:

1. Provincial public library
2. Ampur (District) public library
3. Mobile library.

The mobile library transports reading material to site villages by way of car, boat, motorcycle, and other means. Books may be arranged in sets, put separately in each box and the book box is sent to the target village in rotation. Thus the people in each village are able to read different sets of books one after the other.

The book box is designed in various ways. It can be of various design and material.

Village reading centre

Another effort to provide reading materials to the people in rural areas is the setting up of the village reading centres. Each village is responsible for the construction of its own centre. Newspapers and some books are provided by the Department of Nonformal Education. The village committee is charged with another duty: running and looking after the centre.

Book donations

Book Donation Centres are organised at the national as well as provincial levels. The public are requested to donate their used books to one of the centres. Donation boxes are also installed in many public places. Books may be dropped in the box and are collected and distributed by the officials. Each year some hundred thousand up to several million copies of books, newspapers, magazines, etc. are donated and distributed to the village reading centres throughout the country.

School libraries

School libraries, especially those in the community school project, normally extend their services to the community at large. The National Commission for Elementary Education, for example, has established a policy regarding the function of the school in connection with rural development. Among the suggested services to the community, the library service is one.

Book writing for the villagers

Books should be specially prepared for the villagers, geared to their specific needs. Books prepared for general readers tend to be urban-oriented, showing aspects of life much different from their own. News, stories and information contained in the newspapers and books for general readers tend to reinforce the belief that rural culture and way of life is miserable and inferior; consumption pattern should follow the urban model. Reading material for general readers are not well adapted to the reading level of the villagers whose education background is no more than elementary schooling.

It is not always possible to produce good books for the villagers. Commercial producers must think first in terms of profit before they make any decision. Consumers of books in rural areas are mostly low-income earners. Sale volume is certain to be small. Because of this, book producers tend to produce books that will appeal to general readers, thus neglecting the specific nature of rural customers.

While the private sector is not so eager to invest in this risky business, it is assumed that a good government should fill the gap. This is not always easy to do, because books are not regarded as one of the top ranking priority items in government spending.

Conclusion

In primitive society, one could live without literacy because everybody would use the oral language in communication. In the literate society, however, those who lack literacy skills will suffer the most from their inability to communicate through the written word.

Thailand could be proud of its long history of mass education that has helped more than 90% of the adult population to become literate. In spite of such an achievement, however, we should be concerned with the fact that those who have already acquired literacy skills do not use them continuously and often relapse into illiteracy or become ignorant about what is going on around them. We have invested a large sum of money in education, but we have done very little to maintain the ability already gained from such an investment and to develop it further. This is a sad story. Education planners think narrowly in terms of school education, but forget to plan for what follows after the students leave school. They think that what is taught in school is complete and durable and nothing more is needed to be done. Because of such a false concept, facilities to ensure further reading and learning have not been provided for out-of-school people. Owing to such negligence, a great deal of wastage occurs due to a gradual loss in aquired literacy skills and complete stagnation of intellectual growth on the part of the learner.

What I would strongly suggest is a new way of thinking in educational planning; a planning system that would equally care for both in- and out-of-school populations. An appropriate measure should be taken to ensure that everybody can learn continuously, especially by way of self-teaching: reading, observing, doing, etc. Facilities for self-teaching should be provided, especially books, newspapers, magazines, booklets etc. All reading material should be specially designed and suitably adapted to specific groups. Rural people should not be the victims of propaganda from commercially prepared reading materials. The goal of books' promotion should be clear enough: providing the kind of reading materials that will not mislead rural readers into rejecting their own community and environment and into believing that the urban life is superior and the urban pattern of consumption more desirable.

Literacy for women

In the area of women in development there is a growing number of women's groups and NGO's who are experimenting with or have already developed their own didactic materials for women who want to learn to read and write. Such materials for example are in use in the Dominican Republic (»Tomasa«), in Mexico (»Lupe« and »Lola«) and in Haiti (»Falek«).

In general the financial resources of these groups are not sufficient to guarantee a broad distribution outside the country of origin. As a consequence a lot of experience and good ideas are lost and other groups interested in the issue begin to »reinvent the wheel«.

This note is a first attempt on the part of the author to start a small documentation of programmes, projects or materials in the area of literacy for women, so that the experiences women have made are not lost altogether and women can exchange their ideas and plan further actions.

I would therefore be very happy about any feedback to this note, ideas, information, materials that can serve us in accumulating all our knowledge.

About the author:

Beate Schmidt has been working in a literacy project for women in **Haiti** from 1985 - 1988. Together with a group of Haitian women, she elaborated a pilot project with the goal to develop materials and methods appropriate to the problems and needs of the three target groups of the project. She is currently doing research on the subject of non-formal education and literacy for women.

The address:

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The statistical evaluation in issue no. 30 of all articles appearing in »Adult Education and Development« showed that several countries were represented frequently and others not at all. As regional emphasis is not our aim in the journal, we are reproducing in the following case studies from three countries whose activities in the field of adult education have, up until now, been scarcely reported on: Mauritania, Senegal and Turkey.
The first article deals with the approach, experiences and problems of literacy work of the NGO A.R.P.R.I.M. which is situated in Nouakchott, B.P. 490, Mauritania.

A.R.P.R.I.M.

Twelve years of experience in the struggle against illiteracy

Introduction

The Pulaar's Revival Association of the Islamic Republic of Mauretania (A.R.P.R.I.M.) with headquarters in Nouakchott is a national, cultural and politically neutral association open to any Mauritanian. A.R.P.R.I.M. has the following tasks:

- to support the national Mauritanian culture, especially the Pulaar culture and language

- to contribute to the eradication of the disease of illiteracy.

Established and officially recognized in 1976, A.R.P.R.I.M. has accumulated twelve years of experience in the field of adult literacy and research in the Pulaar language (Peul language of Mauritania), with its sixteen sections spread over the whole national territory. A.R.P.R.I.M.'s work always respects the law and follows current rules and outlines of the national leadership.

1. Success of A.R.P.R.I.M.

1.1 Public awareness and motivation

One of the association's most important areas of success has been convincing the concerned populations of the necessity to promote and teach African national languages. Thanks to continuous objective sensibilization work, A.R.P.R.I.M. has been able to gain the sympathy and support of large masses of illiterates (being the main beneficiaries of the association's actions) in urban as well as in rural areas. Thus the association has been continuously growing and at the same time the organisation of the association's sections has been enhanced. For this success continuous voluntary action supported by thousands of people, especially young people, has been necessary.

Public awareness and motivation are ensured by the members of A.R.P.R.I.M. by means of permanent contact with the target groups (the mass of illiterate people), public conferences, weekly evenings of artistical and theatrical performances, animation of a weekly radio broadcast, production of didactic guides, publication of cultural magazines and finally a framework for literacy meetings.

For a long time limited to a young public and a handful of intellectuals (Arabists and French speaking people), A.R.P.R.I.M. has, since its third general congress (April 1985), devoted special attention to women, the elderly, and the large masses of intellectuals. Women responded massively to the association's call and in many sections they are among the most active and motivated persons.

1.2 Information

Information is ensured by a national cultural quarterly called »*Fooyre Gamtaare*« (»Light of Development«), two local cultural magazines (in Nouadhibou and Zouerat) and finally a weekly programme broadcast by national radio/television.

The radio programme virtually repeats the subjects of the magazine. People appreciate it very much (as the large amount of mail it receives monthly from audiences inside and outside the country shows).

The texts of the magazine and the radio broadcast are edited and diffused in national Pulaar language, the major language used for the association's work.

1.3 Adult literacy

Beyond all doubt adult literacy still remains the sector where the association has had the most success.

Literacy in the national Pulaar language (R.I.M.) has been taught since 1974 by individual persons in various towns of Mauritania and did not consolidate until the official creation of A.R.P.R.I.M. in 1976. Since this time the organisation of the classes has improved considerably and the effectivity has continued to increase in spite of several ups and downs.

First limited to urban centres, adult literacy managed by A.R.P.R.I.M. spread all over the national territory thanks to the perseverance of association members' and the sensibilization work mentioned above.

Lectures in writing and arithmetic courses have been offered to the adults. With the experiences and training requirements of the new literates becoming more and more definite, other courses have been introduced (health, education, grammar, civics, history and geography) to complete the training. Concurrently pedagogical training courses have been offered to the literacy trainers (the best of the new literates and intellectuals reconverted to the national Pulaar language) in the most dynamic sections Nouakchott, Mouadhibou and Kaedi.

Study and reflection days are periodically organized to review programmes, literacy, animation and framework structures and finally tc adapt the courses to the level of the literates' different preoccupations.

From 1976 to 1987 mass literacy has been the main approach. The latest general congress (July 1987) decided to adapt the courses to functional literacy the format of which remains to be defined.

Financing

Since its beginnings A.R.P.R.I.M. has only survived thanks to small financial resources from member contributions, income from cultural and artistical peformances, and unconditional voluntary donations from individuals.

However the scarcity of financial resources is relatively compensated for by the spirit of sacrifice, voluntary service and unpaid work prevailing in the association's activities. As a matter of fact the members of A.R.P.R.I.M. accomplish all their tasks benevolently and spend their energy and financial resources without asking for compensation from the association. This partly explains the association's success during the last decade.

2. The problems of A.R.P.R.I.M.

The major problems creating a handicap for the full development of the association's activities are among others: the weak financial funding, the lack of technical equipment (typewriters, roneos, photocopiers, tape recorders) and the lack of well-trained, well-equipped literacy providers and animators with sufficient didactic training.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that A.R.P.R.I.M. made a notable contribution to the struggle against illiteracy in Mauritania by supporting the national Pulaar language. A.R.P.R.I.M. has always contributed and continues to fight for the consolidation of the national unity of the country, for the harmonious integration of the four national languages into a new, democratic system open to modern science and technology which are the conditions for the cultural liberation and economic and social empowerment of the Mauritanian people.

Currently the lack of materials and financial resources are hampering the association's full development and the conceptual planning and realisation of appropriate didactic materials. As a result it is important to find rapid solutions to this situation so that A.R.P.R.I.M.'s twelve years of experience can be put to better use, the field of struggle against illiteracy extended and the new approach passed by the latest general congress turned into a big success.

It's our move now. A community action guide to the UN Nairobi **Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women**, produced by the IWTC.

In this reader 13 thematic areas and corresponding activities from the voluminous 'Forward-Looking Strategy' document are selected and highlighted. Worth mentioning are not only the systematic set-up but also the lively layout through the refreshing designs of Anne Walker.

If you are interested, please contact:

International Women's Tribune Centre, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Individual copies are free of charge to women and women's groups in Third World countries.

***IRED/Forum** is the communication tool of an international network of 800 peasant associations, artisans' and women's groups, organizations for development actions in urban surroundings and of centres and institutes giving their support to grass-root-groups.*

For further information, please write to one of the following IRED adresses:

- *General Secretariat: 3, rue de Varembé, case 116, CH – 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland*
- *Eastern and Southern Africa: Katanga House, Selous Street, P.O. Box 8242, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe*
- *West and Central Africa/Sahel: Service d'Echanges et d'Appui à la Gestion (SEAG), B.P. 12757, Niamey, Niger*
- *Latin America: c/o DESCO, Av. Salaverry 1945, Lima 14, Peru*
- *Asia: Bangalore Office, P.O. Box 453, Bangalore 560004, India*
  Colombo Office, No. 64, Horton Place, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka.

The following is the shortened version of a manuscript by M.L. Kane with the title: »La vie Sénégalaise vers une education des adultes«. It concerns the reorientation of adult education, in particular literacy policy, as drawn up by the C.N.R.E.F. (Commission Nationale de Réforme de l'Education et de la Formation). The author, himself a member of the Commission, can be contacted at the following address:
M.L. Kane, C.N.R.F. — Direction Alphabétisation, 29, Rue Vincens, Dakar, Senegal.

M.L. Kane

Definition of a literacy policy in Senegal

The basic idea in this context is to start from the old in creating something new and original which is capable of responding to the strong aspirations of the Senegalese people.

The characteristics of the current stage are:

- the lack of resources
- the lack of coordination between national leadership and the different institutions and organisations involved in literacy

- absence or deficiency of precise assessments of practical experiences
- the selective character of functional literacy as defined in 1965 by the conference of UNESCO in Teheran and adopted by all of the member countries is in itself a limitation. That is why the commissioners say that »as a matter of fact it has been stated that functional literacy aimed merely at the transmission of skills in specific fields and to workers being integrated into particular production units framed by determined societies and with the purpose to increase their productivity.«

In addition to this, narrow utilitarian purposes have often tended to reduce the position and role of national languages in literacy to the benefit of French.

This is why until now literacy in spite of efforts from the national leadership has been carried out in isolation »without taking into account the requirements of an efficient struggle against illiteracy among the large masses«.

In this context, a new literacy policy must have a determined approach and aim simultaneously towards two major gaols: universal school attendance and mass literacy.

As far as the latter is concerned, we must keep in mind that officials are working on an integrated plan for the elimination of illiteracy in the country before the year 2000.

For this purpose many teachers and officials have been trained for the transcription of national languages, in the hope that they, in turn, will multiply the training. However in this field many things remain to be done. Numerous preliminary errors will have to be corrected before they lead to fatal prejudices endangering efficiency.

The second point of the new policy is related to the restructuring of literacy, improved mobilization of resources, better coordination of different actions and finally the definition and implementation of appropriate methodology.

This restructuring will include measures such as:

- creation of a new literacy direction endowed with appropriate means
- mobilization of the private and public sectors, state institutions, mass organizations, associations and movements (e.g. students and teachers) for the participation of all vital forces of the country in the struggle against illiteracy
- working out appropriate high-level literacy programmes
- periodic control and assessment of experiences in order to make all the necessary modifications and improvements
- conception and application of a post-literacy policy allowing the newly-literate people to practice their skills, to take an interest in reading and learning in order to maintain and develop their practice of the written language.

The **Institute of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies**, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Sierra Leone, has published a number of materials concerned with literacy in their series »Adult Education in Sierra Leone: Theory and Practice«. Amongst them are:

- Literacy: International Statements and a New Dialogue
- International Literacy Day, 8th September, 1986 — Co-operating or Campaigning — Are We Ready for Literacy in Sierra Leone?
- A Study of Motivational Factors Affecting Participation in Adult Literacy Classes in Dan Street, Freetown, Gloster Village and Waterloo Village
- The Kamakwie Functional Adult Literacy Programme — An Evaluative Study
- Giving and Taking Involved in Sierra Leonean Adult Education.

The Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) held its 16th Annual Conference in Kaduna from 17 - 21 August, 1987. Results are printed in a report **»Adult Education and Rural Transformation. A Blueprint for Action«**. This is available from:

Prof. Michael Omolewa, Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Leo Kwami T. Dorvlo, Senior Resident Tutor at the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, sent us a **»Training Guide for Adult Literacy Facilitators. The Freirean Way«** which he developed from his experience in literacy work.

You can contact him at:

IAE, University of Ghana, P.O. Box 53, Ho, Volta Region, Ghana, West Africa.

Dr. A.K. Msimuku and Mr Dickson Mwansa, both members of the Faculty of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Zambia, prepared a study »Literacy for Development in Zambia: A Review of Efforts Undertaken«. If you are interested please write to them at CCE, Department of Adult Education, P.O. Box 32379, Lusaka, Zambia.

We have received quite a good number of articles on **Literacy Work in Canada**. Amongst them are:

- *Adult Illiteracy in Canada*, prepared by John C. Cairns, February 1988, available from: Council of Ministers of Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Suite 5 - 200, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V5, Canada
- *Broken Words. Why Five Million Canadians Are Illiterate. The Southam Literacy Report*. For copies write to: Literacy, Southam Newspaper Group, Suite 900, 150 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Y8, Canada
- *Literacy/Alphabétisation* is the journal of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, 9 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 1J6, Canada. Their spring 1988 volume 13, No. 1, is concerned with »Moving Into the Next Decade«.

Last but not least an extract from a manuscript by Ali Arayici. Those who would like to delve deeper into the literacy problems in Turkey, can request the full-length version of the article from the following address:

Ali Arayici, 25, rue raymond de la grange, 94190 Villeneuve St. Georges, France.

Ali Arayici

The present-day problem of literacy in Turkey

Final observations

Soon after the movement of secularization the approaching destruction of Islam in this country was been predicted. Nevertheless Islam still prevails in Turkey in spite of the secularization of the state and the fact that, at least in large cities, westernization has shattered moral as well as public life. It is an interesting fact that all the countries whose educational development has been analysed (Iran, Turkey, Pakistan) have a large number of underdeveloped villages; in Turkey there are 40,000 such villages.

If Turkey wanted to adopt measures in this field and carry out reforms such as generalizing primary school and offering a strict minimum of secondary school education, it is evident that she would face insurmountable difficulties, e.g. the necessity to literarize the adult population, the increasing school requirements due to population growth and finally the undeniable lack of funds for education.

According to the recommendations of international education conferences, the best solution seems to be first and foremost minimal education for all school-age children. This plan is only desirable and feasible if Turkey agrees to extend schooling to a minimum of six years. In addition to this we note that Turkish educationalists think that five years of primary school are insufficient. So we are inclined to propose the virtual integration of villages to create little towns as we consider that, at least as far as literacy is concnered, we can find the effects as well as the causes of the whole problem in rural areas. Nevertheless Turkey has been able to get over this difficulty surmounting the big barrier existing in Islamic countries considered underdeveloped and preventing women from freeing themselves from the misery of illiteracy.

From this clearly follows that female illiteracy outnumbers male illiteracy in all age groups. Let us go back over the causes: According to traditional mentality prevailing particularly in rural areas, young girls and women are not supposed to practice professional skills outside the house and consequently do not require training at an advanced level, reasoning mixed with the fear of sending a young girl to a remote school also visited by boys (apprehension of gossip spoiling the good reputation of the young girl ready for marriage). The measures adopted at official levels in sustaining the literacy of young people during their military service are very commendable but do not contribute to the educational development of young girls and women.

This report is concerned with a literacy initiative in a largely non-literate environment, the Southern Highlands of Papua Guinea. Mr. Ephraim Apelis is a senior lecturer at the Educational Research Unit of the University of Papua New Guinea, Box 320UPO, Papua New Guinea. This is a shortened version of the full report which you can obtain direct from him.

Ephraim T. Apelis

Educating the illiterate: Evaluation of the Southern Highlands Literacy Programme in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea has one of the highest rates of illiteracy in the Asia-Pacific region (ages 15 and over). Although there has been a percentage improvement since 1971, there may have been an increase in the absolute number of illiterates. Two major obstacles to literacy development in the region have been identified: (i) the rate of population growth which is higher than the population rate (children and adults) being made literate throughout the national school system; and (ii) the high student drop-out rate before grade six in primary schools means that children have insufficient skills to retain literacy, thereby further increasing the already growing illiterate adult population.

The Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea in 1971 had the highest illiteracy rate of 91.8 percent, 24.2 percent higher than the national average, men (86.7) and women (96.4) (Weeks, 1985: 3). For this reason, the province declared a mass literacy campaign, the first and only one of its kind in the country, intended to build on the past efforts of mission education.

Southern Highlands mass literacy campaign: an overview

Southern Highlands is by far the only province in Papua New Guinea to have attempted a mass literacy campaign at the provincial level (Norumbu and Croft, 1981). The campaign was inspired by the lack of proper coordination between the various missions which had played a major role in organising literacy classes throughout the province. However, many problems have been associated with the development of literacy. These are: the problem of so many languages; the churches' own spiritual motives were unrelated to the development of literacy; untrained literacy teachers; lack of adequate materials; and lack of proper coordination (Dodds and Apelis, 1983). The idea of provincial literacy coordination was first voiced in 1977 - 78, which was also the beginning of cooperation of adult literacy programmes between the missions and the provincial government (Norumbu and Croft, 1981; see also Apelis 1985; 1986a and 1986b).

With the campaign, came the establishment in 1980 of the Extension Services Support Unit (ESSU) as the executive arm of the newly created Provincial Literacy Committee and several District Literacy Committees. ESSU was given the task of coordinating all provincial literacy activities through the established committees. Literacy, however, was only one of the many nonformal education activities that came under the administrative umbrella of ESSU. An integrated approach to rural development was envisaged but without much success.

There has been an increase in enrolments in literacy programmes over the years, although there was a slight drop immediately after the campaign, because of the sudden withdrawal of the literacy subsidies by the provincial government (Dodds and Apelis, 1983). Many classes ceased operating because literacy teachers were not being paid their allowances. An earlier estimate of enrolment in both Tokples and Tokpisin classes was 5200 people (Powell and Gimer, 1981). The figure often being quoted is 30,000 comprising adults who have attended some kind of literacy classes over the campaign period and including the early 1960's which were largely mission efforts (Croft, 1982). The figure may have gone over the 60,000 mark, including recent enrolments from 1984 to 1988 at the rate of 5,000 people per year. A precise figure is not possible because of unreliable statistical data at ESSU in Mendi, the district centres and project sites. In terms of attendance, the campaign has made a remarkable achievement, particularly in view of the 1971 Census figure of 91.8 percent illiteracy, which was the highest in the country and 24.2 percent over the national rate of 67.6 percent (Weeks, 1985). Though claims may be made that there may have been a decrease in the illiteracy rate and an increase in literacy enrolments, there is no evidence to confirm whether or not people who have attended adult classes are now able to use their acquired literacy skills. This is the primary aim of the present evaluation.

Framework for the case study

Literacy in the Third World can be categorized into four interrelated developmental models or strategies: (i) the 'fundamental education' approach; (ii) the 'intensive-selective functional' approach; (iii) the 'conscientization' approach and; (iv) the 'mass campaign' approach (Lind, 1985). Although each model is confined to a specific set of activities, most literacy programmes are eclectic in nature. In the 'fundamental education' approach, literacy was only one of the activities of community development and the participants were both adults and children. The concept, promoted by UNESCO, was more interested in the intellectual preoccupation, undertaken during the period 1946 - 64. The 'selective-intensive functional' approach was operative in eleven selected Third World countries which operated under the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP). It covered functional literacy projects supported by UNESCO and UNDP from 1967 to 1972. Its main objective was to test and demonstrate the social and economic returns of literacy. It aimed to pioneer an eventual World Literacy Campaign. The 'conscientization' approach of which Paulo Freire is the major spokesman is concerned with raising political awareness amongst the social and economically oppressed illiterate. Its strategies and content support an educational process that liberates the mainstream of development. The key elements of this liberating education are 'dialogue' and 'participation' through problematization exercises. Learners become involved in discussions throughout the different stages of the learning process. The approach was first put on trial in Brazil during the early sixties, in Chile in the late sixties and Guinea-Bissau in the late seventies. The 'mass campaign' approach has been difficult, particularly in revolutionary societies, such as Nicaragua, Cuba and Brazil, though those aimed at socialism have been successfully implemented, for example, the Tanzanian experience (Nyerere, 1978). The approach seeks to involve adults in programmes aimed at making people literate within a given time frame. 'Literacy is seen as a means to a comprehensive set of ends: economic, social-structural, cultural and political' (Lind, 1985: 27).

In view of what has been discussed so far, it is important to stress the focus of this study, which is on the 'education of adults' with reference to the Third World. The Southern Highlands model of literacy development is unique in the sense, that although referred to as a 'campaign' it has mixed features of several different approaches. The programme can be closely linked with the Tanzanian campaign, which was more socialist in nature, rather than revolutionary with which programmes of this kind have often been closely identified. The Southern Highlands model, to some extent, has also attempted to adopt various features of the functional and conscientization approaches in its training and implementation processes. Like many other Third World programmes, its original objectives were understood differently by the actual implementators and their beneficiaries.

Literacy achievements

The study included 216 subjects, 133 adults (15 years and over) and 83 school leavers who had completed grade six. They were purposely selected and given tests to gauge their reading and writing abilities in Huli (their 'tokples'), Tokpisin and English. The test participants were selected from three church agency programmes: United Church (UC); Evangelical Church of Papua (ECP); and the Christian Brethren Church (CBC) in Tari and Koroba districts of Southern Highlands. The tests were: oral reading (test 1); reading and writing comprehension (test 2); and letter writing (test 3). All three tests were conducted in the three given languages under three language sections, however, only the 'letter writing' test was made optional, where the participants were allowed to choose the language in which they were to write their letter. The three church programmes were selected out of about six agency programmes operating within the same vicinity (Tari and Koroba districts).

The campaign approaches of the three missions are assumed to be different with respect to: (i) historical development; (ii) language of literacy; (iii) methods of teaching; (iv) availability and suitability of reading materials in 'tokples'; and (v) the supervision and coordination of the literacy programme. Historically, of the three agency programmes, ECP has had the longest involvement dating back to the late fifties and early sixties. UC and CBC missions only began to take education seriously in the seventies. In terms of language, UC and ECP missions taught most of their lessons in 'tokples', except for CBC missions which conducted classes in tokpisin. The methods of teaching differed slightly due to the type of materials used and the different training undertaken by the literacy teachers. Most of these materials were published by the ECP missions for their audience in Huli, although CBC obtained most of its tokpisin materials from outside the province. In terms of supervision and management, the UC Coordinator is from the local area while the management of ECP and CBC are still highly dominated by expatriate mission workers. This explains the difference in teacher training and material production in the different areas.

A summary of data comparing adult learners with school leavers indicated the superiority of 'length and amount of education' over the short nonformally organized adult literacy classes. The findings were consistent with other similar Third World studies concerned with the quality of reading and writing skills (Simon, 1980), and the assessment of functional adult education programmes (CERID, 1982). Nevertheless, adults did equally well if not better, considering the nature of their learning process, in 'Tokples' and Tokpisin. Some earlier results of the same study (Apelis, 1987) revealed no significant difference between participants of both programmes by sex, i.e. female adults did as well as female school leavers as did male adults against male school leavers. The summary of achievements are:

1. There seems to be a higher reading ability among participants of both programmes in Huli (tokples), adult learners and school leavers. While adult learners only read well in Huli, the school leavers read equally well in all three languages in order of English, Tokpisin and Huli. While the results may show nega-

tively against the adult learners, they have done remarkably well considering their educational limitations in that: (i) most have never been taught to read in Tokpisin; and (ii) they have all never been taught to read in English.

2. The results of the second tests, on 'reading and writing comprehension' seem to be almost identical with the first test: (i) adults read and wrote well only in Huli; while (ii) their counterparts performed equally well in all three languages.

3. The 'letter writing' test was the hardest of all three tests. School leavers could only manage an average level of writing ability, almost equally in all three languages. Their counterparts, however, surprisingly wrote better in Tokpisin than Huli and English. The most surprising result was that adults wrote slightly better in Tokpisin then their counterparts.

Findings also indicated a high level of reading in tokples by all three agencies, although ECP did not do as well as CBC and UC. As expected, CBC adults had a higher reading ability in Tokpisin than UC and ECP. For those that attempted to read in English, the best was CBC. In the reading and writing comprehension test, all three agencies did equally well in Huli. Surprisingly, UC read and wrote better with comprehension in tokpisin than CBC having had less teaching in the language. In the letter writing test, CBC adults had the highest means both in Huli and Tokpisin also being the most difficult of the tests.

In all, the results seem to indicate the following:

1. Adults and school leavers can read equally well in Huli (Tokples), but only school leavers read well in Tokpisin and English. The participants of both programmes have equal reading skills in Huli, but not Tokpisin and English.

2. Participants of both programmes also have an equal level of reading ability and comprehension in Huli, but school leavers have a better command of Tokpisin and English.

3. In reading and writing comprehension, the impression given is that adults are only literate in Huli, while their counterparts are literate in all three languages.

4. Surprisingly, on an average performance, adults can write better in Tokpisin than Huli, especially when most have not been taught in Tokpisin. Their level of writing ability in Tokpisin is even slightly better than that of school leavers.

5. The only difference among the agency programmes is the comprehension ability of UC adults in English, where they seem to have outclassed their counterparts in the second test involving independent reading and writing which were guided by a set of instructions. It is even more surprising since they had never been taught in English.

Concluding remark

This paper has made some critical observations about the Southern Highlands adult literacy programme in view of similar Third World experiences. Some issues emerged from the study which provide better understanding of the techniques of measuring literacy effectiveness and factors influencing programme implementation and outcome.

From this we can, perhaps, infer the following conclusions: (i) the SH study confirms the level and length of education as important factors for retaining literacy skills; (ii) adults learn better in their own local language with greater possibility of transferring skills between languages. Some knowledge of different testing methods and procedures is important as it may account for differences in the second test involving simple 'multiple-choice' questions. These findings have policy implications as to the level, length and type of education offered, language use and the applicability of skills learned. Such information would be of interest to Third World educational innovators and decision makers, particularly in terms of their cost effectiveness and cost efficiency.

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Working Together for Literacy — A Guide Book for Local Language Literacy Programs by M.D. Stringer and N.G. Faraclas.
We cite from the cover:
Working Together for Literacy is a complete step-by-step guide for setting up Local Language Literacy Programs and teaching literacy classes with success in almost any community. Because the Local Language Literacy Program uses a Community Framework to set up literacy classes and community projects to pay all program costs, communities have been able to set up literacy classes with very few resources other than a group of community members who want to help other community members to read and write their own language.
Published by:
Christian Books Melanesia Inc., PO. Box 488, Wewak, Papua New Guinea.

The survey on which this article is based was conducted in the rural areas around Madras and in the slums of Madras from October 1987 to March 1988 by a team consisting of Fr Maria Elias (Loyola College), Ms R. Padmini (University of Madras, Department of Adult and Continuing Education), Ranjanidoss (State Resource Centre) and Alan Rogers (Reading University). This paper has been drawn from the first draft of the final report which is now being concluded jointly by the research team.

Maria Elias / R. Padmini / Radjanidoss / Alan Rogers

How do you feel? A pilot attitudinal survey among rural literacy instructors in Tamil Nadu

Background

In the course of preparing for a participatory evaluation of literacy teaching in rural Tamil Nadu, through which literacy instructors (animators as they are called in that part of the world) would themselves assess the impact of their work on the villages in which they lived, we came to realise that many people held very negative ideas about these animators. We quote one of the many such statements:

> *»the lack of confidence and ideological commitment among literacy teachers undercut the grand intentions for structural transformation of [India's] National Adult Education Programme«.*

Most commentators seemed to be aware (at least on paper) that the task of teaching literacy to villagers is a very difficult task and involves much more than simply teaching (instructional) skills: especially when it is written up in the highest terms, as in India's [National] Adult Education Programme:

> *»to help the illiterate and the poor [to] rise to their own liberation through literacy, dialogue and action«.*

In these circumstances, those who had to choose village animators were looking for people who had very special attitudes and who could be enabled to develop very special skills. But most of the animators employed in this task, it was felt,

> *»were not well equipped either by aptitude or by training to play the role of change-agents«.*

Some (many?) dropped out and others failed to ensure the continued attendance of the learners so that their centres too were closed before the completion of the course.

Such views seemed to be strongest among the state authorities and parastatal bodies, but some NGOs also held similar ideas. Experience however suggested to us that there was another side to this question: although there were, to be sure, several animators who did lack confidence and were not committed, there were many others, we thought, who were able, committed, experienced and articulate. We were challenged as to whether we could prove this or not. Out of this arose a small research project.

The project

The aim of the project was to try to help a number of literacy animators to express their feelings about four things:

- about themselves
- about their literacy work
- about the learners
- and about the agency which employed them.

Clearly we needed to know some other things about them in order to analyse the findings, so that other matters were included in the discussions; but the primary objective was to attempt to discover the attitudes of the animators themselves.

We considered various methods: since attitudes are strictly personal and since there would always be a temptation for some individuals to dominate a group's thinking, we decided not to use participatory groups for this exercise. Instead, we settled for a variety of methods: a series of individual in-depth structured interviews from members of the team working with animators they already knew in some way or another: to be followed by group meetings of these same animators in which they discussed the findings of the interviews among themselves, and finally a series of meetings between the animators and the agencies to see if attitudes on both sides were entrenched or could be changed; to give the agencies a chance to listen to their animators rather than talk to them.

In fact we were not able (within the time available for this unfunded research project) to complete all stages of the work. Five sets of interviews were completed: with 22 (out of 29) animators employed in a university programme; with 15 (out of 100) animators employed in an NGO-run programme; with all 11 animators in an urban programme administered by an NGO; and with 15 animators who had completed their task in 1981 (in an attempt to see if the attitudes they held during their literacy work revealed themselves in other work carried out in the village since the completion of that literacy programme: the findings of that 'tracer' study are not included in this article but will be included in the final report). Not all the group meetings were held but some were and revealed their importance and potential for change and development.

Purpose of the survey

The survey was not intended to be of academic interest; it was intended to lead to policy decisions and changed practices in some or all of the following:

- in the selection of animators: are we choosing the right people for this very difficult task?
- in the training we offer to the animators: how can we build up their confidence and competencies?
- in the creation of better in-service support systems: how can we help these animators to maintain and increase their confidence and motivation?
- in the use of some of these animators in planning new programmes and in training: how can we use the experience gained after the end of the programme?

We were conscious that this could only be a pilot study: we were testing the approach and methodology to see if it would yield profitable results. Bigger samples will be needed before the conclusions are firm. Nevertheless, we are convinced that this approach and methodology, although time-consuming, if applied to a large enough sample, would yield valuable material on which practical judgements could be made.

Conclusions

What follows is a summary of the main conclusions from this survey: a full report is in the process of being completed and will be available soon.

Almost all our animators came from the same caste, religion, village community, gender and age group (there were one or two differences in this respect) as their learners. There was a tendency for them to come from families of a slightly higher social or income level group than the learners and of course they were of a different educational level. (53 of the 63 interviewed were women.)

Are we selecting the right persons as animators? From the survey, it would seem that about one third of all the animators are being asked to undertake a task too difficult for them: they should in our opinion never have been invited in the first place. This is a criticism of the agency which appointed them, not the animators: they find themselves in the same situation as a beginner on the piano who is being asked to playa public performance of a Beethoven sonata. Several of our animators did not read anything regularly themselves and they felt incompetent for the task they were being asked to perform. They had negative attitudes towards themselves, the task, the learner and the agencies. Many of these had low educational levels (Standard 8 or even below): but the attitudes were not always related to educational achievements — some with the School Leaving Certificate had negative attitudes and others with lower grades had developed positive attitudes through experience. But it was clearly related to experience of literacy: only eight out of the fifty-two rural animators had been a literacy instructor before (all the urban animators had served several times); the attitudes of those who had worked as instructor more than once were significantly more positive than those of the majority who were first-time animators.

The results of this can be seen in that some 40% of all chosen and appointed animators in Tamil Nadu fail to complete their year's course: in the university programme, nearly 50% of all classes were closed prematurely. The responsibility for this must lie, not with the animators but with those who chose the wrong people, with the training systems which failed to equip the chosen animators properly and with the agencies who failed to support them properly.

One of the reasons why so many ill-suited persons are appointed as animators is the practice of first selecting villages for literacy programmes on the basis of convenience of location and then looking around for a local animator (a policy stronger with state and parastastal bodies than with NGOs). Since few animators (especially the women) are willing or able to travel to other villages to conduct evening literacy classes, it is impossible at times to run classes in some centres without pressing into service persons who are reluctant, ill-equipped and not able to cope with this most difficult task.

Some agencies seem to pursue different policies from others in this respect: the NGO had a much higher educational achievement level among their animators than did the state body or the university (more than 50% of the university animators did not complete their primary schooling as against none of the NGO animators and one third of the state animators).

The use of such a person with the potential danger either of the class ceasing to exist before it has completed any useful task or of the class continuing to the end with falling attendance of learners and falling interest is in our opinion harmful to the whole cause of literacy. It is better not to run a class in such a centre and to seek another more suitable location than to run a bad class. There is much to be said for using those animators who have through their experience built up their confidence and commitment, even if alongside other novice animators. But if it is thought to be necessary at times to appoint as instructor someone who is as yet unready by experience or educational level for the task, it must surely follow that **extra** support will be needed to enable these persons to build up their motivation, confidence and skills to engage in the difficult task of literacy teaching.

Of course it is not always possible to identify when appointing literacy animators those who will leave during the course of the year for some reason or other, mainly family reasons such as marriage. But it is possible to ensure that a greater sense of commitment exists and to foster this sense of commitment with enhanced job satisfaction so that fewer animators will leave at the first opportunity. This is surely achieved through adequate training both before and during the course and by constant recognition and support during the programme.

Training the potential

It is clear from the responses that the animators, even those who possessed positive attitudes, felt that they needed better training and continued assistance with their task, that they were too often unprepared and were too often left on their own to face the difficult tasks of teaching literacy. For there is much within their rural environment which demotivated them and little which strenghtened their motivation and confidence. These tasks — the strengthening of motivation and the building up of confidence — are the tasks of the agency; they are part of the care and concern which every agency can show towards the people they ask to help them with this difficult task.

Few of these animators could say anything positive about themselves in relation to the task. But they were most conscious of need: »I am talented enough for the task but not confident enough«; »I did not try for any new job because I do not have the ability and in any case I am a woman«; »I need some new methods« was the cry time and again. »Inwardly I realised the need for training but was afraid to communicate to the supervisor even«.

It was also most striking that the animators were unable to examine the task they were engaged in in any depth: they could not for example say what they most liked and most disliked about the task. They knew their learners well, and most of them felt positively towards them, believing that they wanted to learn and that they could learn. But they were not nearly so aware of themselves, their own strengths and weaknesses.

They were more aware of the impersonal than the personal, of the material rather than the human resources available for the task. They were almost all of them able to say what was needed to make their class more successful, at least in the way of equipment. Equally, about the same number were aware of their local community and its developmental needs. But personal development was a concept they had not been helped to grasp; it was not part of their training in any programme (except the urban programme).

Many of the animators who held positive attitudes towards their learners felt that the pressures of living their daily lives more than unwillingness and inability were preventing their learners from learning. And some of the animators saw progress: »they could not think of learning anything in the beginning. Then slowly they got used to it and picked up learning confidence«; »in general they are enthusiastic, some days they are not. They became sociable and so the centre became an interesting one«; »one learner after learning wrote a letter to his mother. The letter was corrected by me. There was a sense of achievement in the learner«.

And most of these animators were more or less committed to their learners, even to the extent of wishing to continue to work with them after the formal ending of the course. These animators (more than the supervisors who were also interviewed) were able to indicate the learning needs of the learners, the more realistic of which could have been used as the basis for the learning programme. One indicated that her »learners tend to link literacy skill with better job opportunity«, and another that »they want to become independent persons by learning literacy skills«, aims which the literacy instructors could do little to advance (»I could not give what they expected, like a job: their needs were not fulfilled«). But other objectives were closer: »the widow learners come to gain courage and strength to do their job alone«.

For those learners with more immediate learning needs, more limited ambitions, many of these animators had prepared and utilised different forms of teaching-learning materials on their own initiative. But the attitude of the others towards innovativeness was instructive: most of the fifty percent who had not prepared any teaching-learning materials on their own said that they had not done so because they had not been told to do so by the supervisor.

There was much less enthusiasm about working with their existing agency: in every group could be found those who indicated that they would wish to continue »but with another agency«.

It is, we feel, unrealistic to expect that the sort of attitudes we wish the animators to show will grow and increase naturally; they need to be nurtured, fed, cultivated, developed and strengthened. We need to build up commitment, even where it already exists in part; we need to build up confidence, even where it already exists in part, just as we need to build up skills of teaching, even where these already exist in part. The role we are asking the animator to perform is a very difficult one; we must return to this time and time again, for until the agencies themselves understand how difficult the role is and how much support the animators will need in order to perform it adequately, they will not be able to help the animators as they should.

In this, training is part of the key. Much of this was felt to have been inadequate. Most of the animators said that they wanted more training and some said that they had asked for it in the past. For example, if (as the programme assumes) it takes ten months to help the villagers to 'become aware', how can the animators be expected to undertake this work if they have only had some 2 - 3 days of awareness training themselves? Until they themselves not only **can** do but also **do** do what they are asking the learners to do, they will be ineffective.

Much longer and more effective training (using participatory methods) is vital for the success of the programme. To argue that »we cannot afford it« is like saying that we can't afford petrol for our car: if so, we cannot run it at all. Training is not an optional extra: it is the essential pre-requisite for the whole programme, especially for village literacy animators; it is the essential on-going support which they need in their more or less isolated work.

Support systems

All the animators felt the need for on-going support. Just over one third had built up for themselves some sort of 'help system', through turning to spouses, other animators, other development workers: »I meet the other animators very frequently, ask them how many learners come to their centres and what do they teach etc.«; »we meet frequently and share common concerns«; »we help each other in running the centre; we are very friendly«; »I used to consult my co-animators regarding any doubts«. Of course caste and gender got in the way: »there is one more centre for women in the same colony. Both the animators meet often. He takes the classes in the women's centre, but the woman animator does not come to the male centre«. But the other animators had not built up this network of support; they felt isolated in their task.

All felt that the supervisor was more interested in administrative control than in helping them with their literacy teaching (the NGO animators were an exception in this respect): »it is purely an administrative meeting like checking attendance«; »he writes the remark, 'improve the attendance'«; »he looks into the register. I used to ask for learning materials from him which were never supplied« and so on. It is clear that the visits of the supervisor were seen as a demotivator: thus many said that when meeting the supervisor, »I only listened to what he had to say«, »I do not talk about personal matters«; »nothing more than the administrative concerns; he also does not ask much«.

This last point is important. All the animators felt that the supervisor required them to be organisers and controllers of their learners, to go to call them to class and to insist that they attended. The result was that the animators became as alien in their own villages as the supervisors whom they represented; their role had become an 'imposing' role.

There is one aspect of the training and support of these animators which concerned us greatly. Most of the trainers and all the supervisors were men. When so many of the animators are women, the training and support of these animators must surely take account of women's development. Women should be used as trainers; and it is not possible that some of the supervisors could be women.

Developing the potential

It is not difficult, given the time and willingness of the agency to undertake the task, to identify the strongly positive attitudes among many of the animators. But building these up, maintaining them and utilising them will call for positive attitudes from the agencies towards the animators: and in some cases as we have seen these do not yet exist. The following suggestions have arisen out of our work or have been made to us by others in the course of our discussions.

a) **Commitment:** many animators are or wish to be committed to the programme; but they will only become or remain committed if they see true commitment from the supervisors, project officers and agencies who work with them. Some of our animators believed that such commitment was lacking and thus they found it hard to retain their own commitment.

b) **Continuity:** some of the animators felt that they were somewhat neglected. Just as continuity of contact between animators and learners is necessary for effective learning, so too continuity and regularity of contact between animators and agencies is necessary for continued motivation.

c) **Recognition:** Many of our animators felt their neglect in other ways also; they felt that they were not appreciated. Animators need encouragement, feelings of recognition and success which are in themselves rewards for their hard work, and better incentives to ensure that they do not leave for 'better' jobs. Rarely do the agencies we visited offer tokens of appreciation to the animators for the work they are doing.

d) **Experience:** most of the animators felt that they should be used more than once: they wished to be engaged on this work again and felt that they had something to contribute. This makes sense: an experienced animator is on the whole better than a 'new' animator. Many animators build up valuable experience which is wasted because the programme organisers move in to another village and thus the experienced and trained animators are not used again. Animators should be encouraged to continue to use and develop further their newly gained skills and insights. A permanent cadre of trained animators (what was called to us by one of our respondents »a manpower guild«, though many of these animators and most of the long-serving ones will in fact be women) could be built up and drawn upon. The process by which each agency selects its own animators without liaison is seen to be wasteful, though even now some animators clearly transfer easily from the service of one agency to that of another.

It may be possible for some record to be kept of those who have served as literacy animator with distinction (and there are many of these even among the small sample we were able to survey) and that this list should be made available to all those bodies who are planning and implementing a new programme.

e) Attitudes: We found that where negative attitudes towards the animators existed among the agencies, the animators tended more and more to behave inadequately; the agencies seem to have become demotivators of the animators the more they criticise them. The agencies need to be much more positive towards the animators whose commitment, experience, insights and expertise are often greater than those of their supervisors and project officers.

Using the animators

There are many ways in which those animators who possess relevant experience and positive attitudes can be used by the agency:

a) by being invited to teach literacy in their own village with the existing or a new group of learners; it is not always worthwhile to constantly move on to new centres rather than consolidate in villages in which progress is being made. Such an approach would indicate to the village concerned the commitment of the agency.

b) by being invited to run a centre in a neighbouring known village: we found a willingness on the part of some of the animators to undertake such work provided it was in a village where they were known, though this will not always be possible; more attention might be given to daytime classes where this would suit the needs of the learners.

c) by being invited to offer help informally to new animators in neighbouring villages. The advice and support and assistance of experienced animators through the visits which they could make during the daytime out of class hours to other animators in nearby villages to discuss the work would once again indicate the concern of the agency for their animators. Some would do this without renumeration; for others, a small sum could be drawn from the training allocation within the existing budget.

d) by being involved not just in the running of training programmes but in their planning: they can tell the agencies much of what animators need to learn for the task. They could for example help with the production of packs or information sheets to go out to these instructors regularly.

e) by assisting in the writing of teaching-learning materials for the learners. Most of the writers' workshops conducted in Tamil Nadu consist of academics and other senior personnel engaged in the promotion of literacy and college students; the use of some experienced animators in this activity would give to much of the material a greater sense of relevance.

There are many other ways in which experienced motivated animators can become partners in this enterprise. It should be the urgent task of each agency to try to find ways of using those talented animators they have helped to create and not to ignore them once the immediate programme is over.

This last statement is perhaps the most important message of this survey. Our final conclusion reiterates what has been the theme of this project from the start — that there are many trained, experienced and committed animators in the villages of Tamil Nadu and in India generally.

Not to use these persons is not only wasteful of developed or potential human resources; it reveals an attitude on the part of the agencies which suggests that these animators are no longer valued or wanted; once they have been used it appears as if the agencies believe that the animators can be dispensed with, the agencies no longer care for them. This lack of caring was a theme which came through on several occasions in our discussions. The animators frequently referred to the lack of commitment on the part of the supervisors and agencies; and it is clear that this caused the animators to lose their own motivation when they saw what they regarded as the lack of motivation of those above them.

There are signs that this has been realised. Experienced animators are being used in some places in training new animators and in planning new adult literacy programmes; those who have already been trained are used as resource persons when they attend further training courses. But much more can be done to recognise these valuable persons who give much committed and relatively unremunerated service to their own local communities. We owe it to them to use them further.

Anil Bordia, a long-service adult educator in the literacy movement and currently Secretary of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, wrote to us in July 1988 informing us of recent decisions by the Indian government to promote literacy work. Additionally, he sent some recent publications amongst which are:

- **Profiles in Literacy.** A collection of success stories on adult education
- **Mass Programme of Functional Literacy.** A collection of stories of student involvement in adult education programmes
- **National Literacy Mission**
- **Voluntary Agencies.** Partners in Literacy Action. Scheme of assistance to voluntary agencies in adult education.

He ends his letter with the note: »I would be greatful if you could please share this material with our colleagues who may be interested.«

For further information please write to him under the address given above.

PAS / DVV

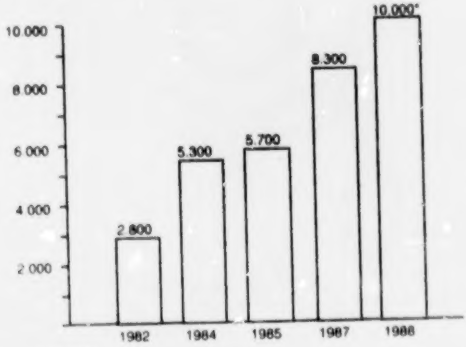
Literacy and Basic Education

in the Federal Republic of Germany

How can there be adults in an highly industrialized country with compulsory education who do not know to read and write? This became a burning question in the Federal Republic towards the end of the 70s as individual adult education institutes offered literacy courses for German-speaking adults as part of their programmes and the mass media presented the problem of illiteracy to a broader public through articles and broadcasts. If it was initially believed that it was only a matter of individuals who had fallen through "holes" in the educational network for various reasons, it soon became clear that even in the Federal Republic the problem was a far-reaching one.

According to surveys carried out over the last years the number of students attending literacy courses has increased steadily

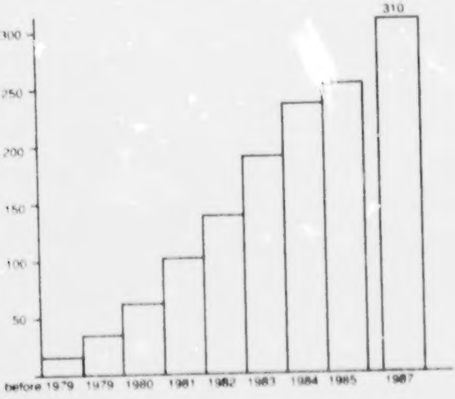
Number of students in literacy courses



Source PAS/DVV
* estimated figures for 1988

Although there is still a lack of provision in rural areas literacy is provided all over the country 90 per cent of the programmes are run by adult education institutes of the German Adult Education Association

Number of adult education institutes with literacy courses



Source PAS/DVV

Literacy programmes in industrialized countries are not an entirely new phenomenon. At the same time, the extent of literacy programmes and their history in adult education are quite different. In 1985 the United Kingdom can look back on ten years of development in literacy work, the starting point of which was an extensive campaign by the BBC in the mid 70s. In France, on the other hand, it was only in 1984 that literacy courses for adults officially achieved greater recognition.

If one measures the treatment of the problem of illiteracy in the Federal Republic against this span of between one and ten years it takes on a middle position

If you could understand the paragraph at first reading, just think how long you had to practice reading mirror writing. If, however, you belong to the undoubtedly larger group of readers who could only read this short text with a certain amount of difficulty, you may wonder why this was the case. In principle you know all the letters. This way of reading the letters is of course unusual. But it isn't only because you just have to read it from right to left instead of the usual left to right. You can't get the sense of the words so quickly, particularly the longer ones? The letters sometimes look alike? You see, there are a lot of questions.

You may well ask what all this has to do with literacy. Of course, comparisons are always difficult. We can't put you in the positon of people learning to read and write from the beginning. But you should consider that difficulties in recognizing letters, reading words and writing sentences only make up a part of literacy work. You can see reading mirror writing as a game. You can choose whether you find the game interesting or don't want to play. A person who is illiterate can't do this. You don't associate this game with negative experiences in your childhood and youth, with experience of failure. It is also unimportant whether you master this game by tomorrow or not. No one demands that you read or write mirror writing at a post office, in a bank, in a town hall and so on. As long as you see the whole thing as a game, even what this text says is not very important for you.

All this is quite different for someone who is illiterate. That is why literacy work requires more than just teaching techniques. If one follows the route students have taken up to the point where they eventually joined a literacy course, it's easy to see what the components of literacy work are today.

Courses for adults in basic education cannot be taken for granted. Recruitment for these courses is necessary and publicity which reaches those who were previously only very seldom, if at all, the target of training and further education programmes. Addressing these students, a part of practical literacy work, involves taking into consideration their fears and inhibitions of those who have made the decision to learn again after a long time.

For those students who want to put their decision into practice, the initial contact is often of decisive importance for further learning. In many institutes which offer literacy courses there are advisory sessions. Contact between tutor and learner is established by personal discussions. Information is given and the difficulties the students have in the new situation is touched upon, so that students know what is in store for them. The stages of working and learning must be made explicit so that students can take an active part in the organisation of their own learning and make decisions on contents and procedures.

Teaching reading and writing requires dealing with learning habits, learning interests and ways of working in many different ways. Therefore knowledge of methods is required for this process, but it is also necessary to talk to the students about their own personal ways of working and to give them help in overcoming their difficulties.

However where learning problems increase and become apparently insurmountable obstacles, counselling is useful. Often the students demand too much of themselves or they are under pressure from outside (often not admitted to) through their situation at home or at work. This can lead to learning blocks and cause anxiety.

After all, literacy work also includes helping others to help themselves with practical learning problems. Socioeducational assistance is to help those who need help because of their deficiencies in reading and writing when it comes to making claims, writing letters or acquiring information.

Adult literacy includes a number of areas we can only hint at here. What is of decisive importance for practical work and therefore for the success of a course is that students become able to use their newly acquired knowledge of the written language in everyday life. It is often difficult to achieve this as the use of written language necessarily brings about changes in many aspects of life. This means for the students

- that they have to do things which, for fear of failure, they may never have done before.
- that they have to do things themselves which others have always done for them.
- that they have to do things where they were convinced they could not do these because of their own incapability.

These changes require that students change their negative self-image into a positive one. This means that counselling sessions must accompany the teaching of reading and writing.

Students' Writings

- *When my daughter Christine first went to school at the age of six, I had a lot of problems. My daughter came to me with her homework. I felt very insecure as I couldn't help her.*
  I gave her the excuse that I didn't have time and that she should wait until Daddy came home. I always used to read to her from picture books and invent the stories. Now I'm really glad I've learnt to read and write at the adult education institute. Up to now my daughter hasn't noticed that I couldn't read and write. And I'm really pleased about that.

  Text written by a student in a literacy course in Aachen.
  Extract taken from "Geschichten von Ochern", PAS/DVV 1985, p. 39

I break out in a sweat from fear if I see pen and paper. My heart beats faster if someone looks over my shoulder when I'm writing. It's a depressing feeling not being able to write down your thoughts because there are so many mistakes in them or to have to avoid everything to do with writing.

taken from: Schweinfurter Grün, PAS/DVV 1985, p. 7

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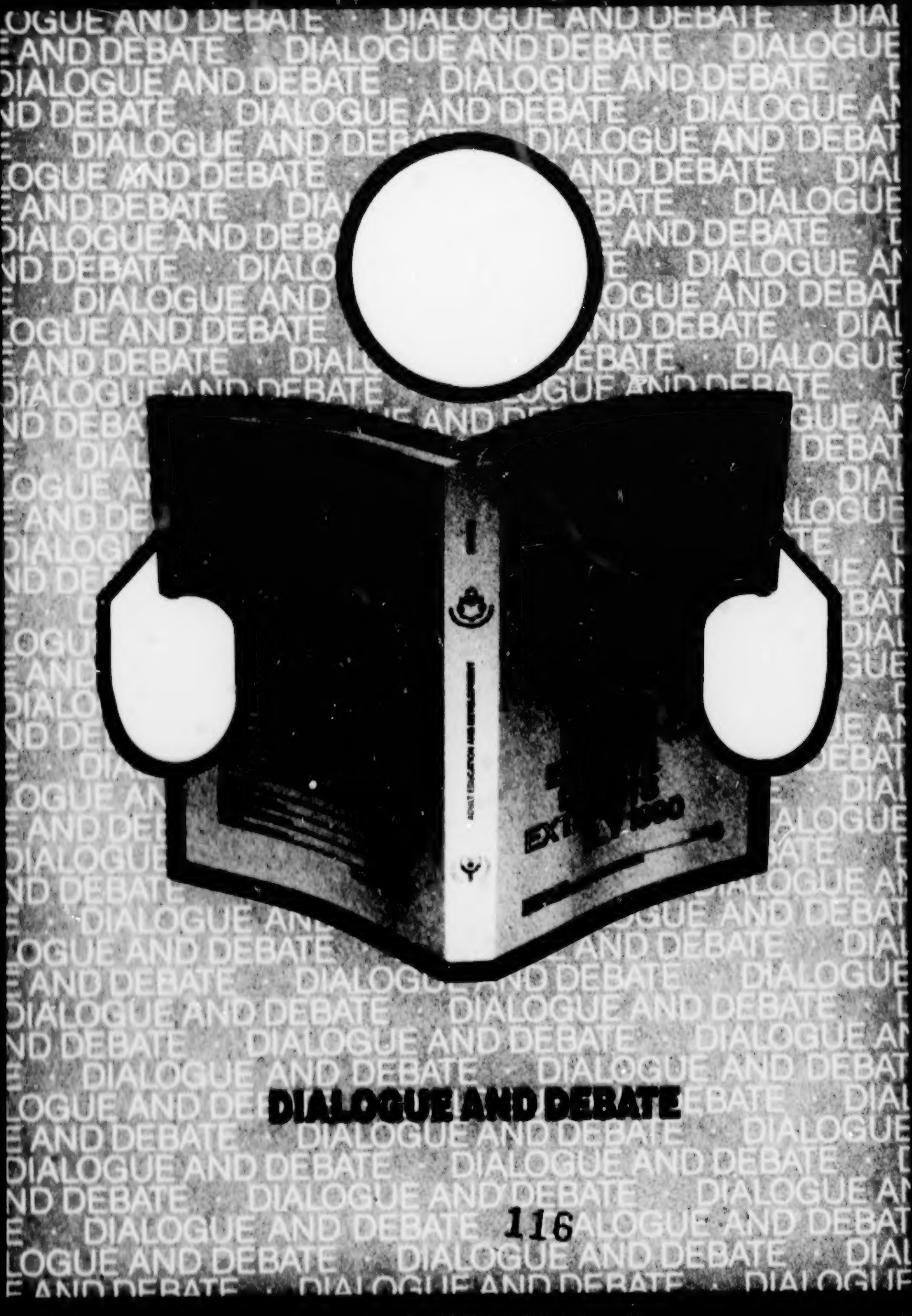
Printed in the Federal Republic of Germany Bonn – Frankfurt 1988



DIALOGUE AND DEBATE

Satyen Moitra

Why should we become literate?

What kind of people are we?
We are poor —
but we are not stupid.
That is why, despite our illiteracy, we still exist.
But we have to know
why we should become literate.

We joined the literacy classes before.
But after some time, we got wise.
We felt cheated. So we left the classes.

Do you know what we found out?
The Babus take up this work in their own interest.
Maybe the election is round the corner,
or perhaps there is a government grant
or something which must be utilised.
What they taught us was useless.

To sign one's name means nothing.
Or to read a few words means nothing.

We agree to join the classes
if you teach us how not to depend on others any more.

We should be able to read simple books,
keep our own accounts, write letters
and read and understand newspapers.

One more thing —
why do our teachers feel so superior?
They behave as if we were ignorant fools,
as if we were little children.

Please do understand
that the teacher may know things which we don't.
But we know a lot of things which are beyond him.

We are not empty pitchers.
We have a mind of our own.
We can reason out things
and, believe it or not,
we also have dignity.
Let those who will teach us remember this.

We have enough troubles and sufferings.
Why should we add to them by joining literacy classes?

If the learning centres can make us feel a little more cheerful,
then we may feel an urge to join the classes.
We are not children.
Let the teacher remember this.
Treat us like adults.
Behave with us as friends.

And yet, something more —
we don't get a square meal.
We have few clothes.
We don't have a proper shelter.
And, to top it all, floods come and wash away everything,
then comes a long spell of drought, drying up everything.
Would it help us if we became literate?

Can literacy help us
live a little better? — Starve a little less?
Would it guarantee that the mother and the daughter
wouldn't have the same sari betweeen them?
Would it fetch us a newly thatched roof over our heads?

Literacy should help us live better —
at least we look at it that way.
They say that things are being planned for us — the poor.
Would literacy help us in knowing those government plans?

Would it help us know
how to raise our yield, and increase our income?
And from where could we borrow money on easy terms,
and what benefits would we get from the cooperatives?

Would we get better seeds, fertiliser and all the water we need?
Would we get proper wages?
All this, we think, is learning for living.
They say that the new programme promises us all this.
But is it only writing on a scrap of paper?
Is it like one of those very many past promises
that were never kept?

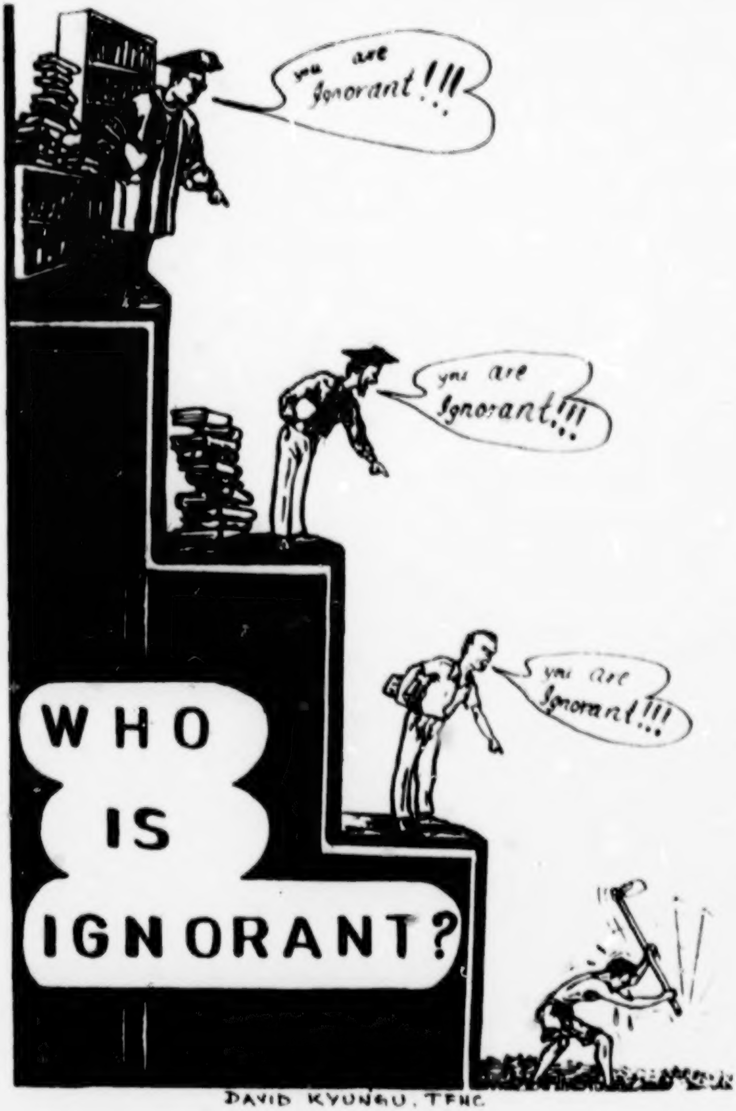
Will this programme teach us
how to think and work together?
Will 'doing' be made a part of 'learning'?
If all this is done,
all of us will join the literacy classes,
it will then be learning to live a better life.

We are weak and are ill very often.
Will the programme teach us
how to take care of our health, and become strong?
If it does, then we shall all come.

They say that there are laws to protect and benefit us.
We don't know these laws — we are kept in the dark.
Would literacy help us know these laws?
Would we know the laws
that have changed the status of women?
And the law that protect the tribals amonst us?
We want a straight answer.

Then shall we decide
whether we should become literate or not.
But if we find out
that we are being duped again with empty promises,
we will stay away from you.

We will say,
'For God's sake, leave us alone'.


you are Ignorant!!!
you are Ignorant!!!
you are Ignorant!!!
WHO IS IGNORANT?

DAVID KYUNGU, TEHC

Paulo Freire

Letter to adult education workers

1. The adult literacy programme as a political act

Our task, which is to ensure that a large number of our comrades, especially in rural areas, can read and write — something they were forbidden to do during the colonial regime — is primarily a political task. The very decision to bring literacy to the masses is already a political act in itself. We must therefore be on our guard against the insinuations made to us, sometimes naively and sometimes astutely, with the aim of persuading us that spreading literacy is a technical and pedagogical problem which should in no way be »mixed with politics«.

In fact, no educational system, and especially no system of adult education, can be neutral. All education has a political intent inherent in it. That is the meaning of the message conveyed by Comrade Pino da Costa, President of the Republic, during the first national adult literacy seminar in December 1976:

»The basic task of the political eduator is to teach adults to read and write their own reality by encouraging them to think critically about the world and to take their place in it with an increasing lucid awareness of their own changing reality. A literacy programme«, added the President, »which is a cultural method of arousing awareness, must be essentially political in nature. It must serve to educate aware individuals, deeply imbued with a critical sense, and to create revolutionaries capable of steadfastly braving the difficulties which may arise along the road to the building of a new society.«

This is the reason why, as we educate the People and are educated by them, we must try increasingly to clarify our political opinion and to be vigilant in ensuring that the theoretical option which we proclaim is consistent with the practice which we follow. We must always be aware of the goals and the targets of our educational work. And this clarity can only increase if we adopt a militant and critical commitment to practical life and through it learn how to work better.

2. The adult literacy programme as an act of knowledge

While being a political act, an adult literacy programme, like all education, is also an act of knowledge. What we mean by this is very simple: what is at stake in any relationship between educator and educated is always something someone wants to know.

In the colonial system of education, the educator transmitted »his« knowledge to us and our role was to »swallow« this knowledge, which also falsified our reality in the interest of the colonizer. Thus, the colonial literacy teacher »taught« b+a=ba, which the illiterate pupil repeated in order to memorize it.

Our continuing revolution today requires us to be consistent with its purposes at all levels of our action. For this reason, we no longer speak of »evening courses for adults« but Cultural Circles; we no longer say »illiterates« but adults who are educating themselves; we no longer say »literacy teachers« but »cultural animators«; we no longer refer to »literacy lessons« but to a debate in which the very reality of the People, contained in »key words« and represented by »codifications«, is discussed and analysed with the people themselves.

In this connection we may again quote the President of the Republic. Commenting on the work of a cultural circle, he stated:

»The attitude of adults in the circle testifies to the fact that silence is no longer possible. All the pre-requisites exist for a permanent dialogue to be established in cultural circles, through practice and reflection, in which generative words will be the very essence of man's recreation and freeing of himself in and through the awareness of his potentialities.«

In a society where »silence is no longer possible« the role of the cultural group leader in his relations with the adults who are educating themselves in the cultural circles can no longer be the role of someone who transfers knowledge, but must become the role of someone who tries, through dialogue, to learn with the other participants in the exercise.

In teaching something to adults, the group leader in turn learns something from them himself. In the revolutionary system of education, which is gradually to replace the colonial system at all levels, the act of teaching cannot be separated from the act of learning, nor the act of educating from the act of being educated.

3. The adult literacy programme in the context of national reconstruction

It is obvious, but let us repeat it once again, that the finalities, the objectives, the contents and the methods which make our adult literacy programme an act of knowledge and a political act cannot be the same as those of a literacy programme in a society in which the workers and peasants are reduced to silence by the ruling classes.

In our country, the adult literacy programme is an effort to reach the point where cultural group leaders and adults learning literacy succeed together »in reading and writing their own reality, in thinking critically about their world and in taking their place with a lucid awareness in the changing reality«.

When the President speaks of »reading and writing reality« he is referring to the need to understand the reality surrounding us not as something static and concealed to which we simply have to adjust, but as something moving, in a state of change. When he speaks of »thinking critically about the world«, he is referring to the need we all feel to understand the deep-lying reasons behind the facts and phenomena of reality. When he speaks of »writing reality, taking one's place in it in full awareness« he is alluding to the action taken by men and women in changing the surrounding reality. This action can change the natural world through work, by clearing the land, sowing, growing and harvesting, or by making bricks from clay and shoes from leather, or else by making a fallen tree-trunk into wood, the wood into planks, and the planks into a boat from which to catch fish to sell and eat. It can also change the other world, the social, political and cultural world, the world concerned with the way in which society is organized, which cannot be understood without realization of the mode of production it engages in and the way its productive forces are organised and used.

All this is »reading« reality, which also implies the link between literacy, production, health and concrete action programmes in the communities.

This concept of the literacy programme as a cultural activity also means that the work of group leaders is not finished when they leave the meeting of the cultural circle. On the contrary, it carries on within the community, and their activities in the cultural circle are only one aspect of it. The fact that the group leaders live with the people and themselves grow accustomed to »reading« the reality of the people, so that they can discuss it with adults in the cultural circles, is fundamental. In the final analysis, the cultural circles are nothing else than centres in which the people discuss their problems, organize themselves and plan specific activities in the collective interest.

It is precisely because we define the adult literacy programme as a cultural activity in the service of the reconstruction of our country, and not merely as learning to read and write, that there may be times when our work with the population will have initially to focus on »reading« and »writing« reality and not on learning the language.

What do we mean by this? We mean that, in some cases, priority may be assigned to organizing the population to analyze its reality and the community's production, health and other problems in order to find collective solutions to them. In other words, the priority may revert to mobilization of the population to encourage it to organize, for example, around an agricultural production co-operative or an anti-malaria campaign. Development activities of this kind may sometimes extend over a long period before the population really feels the need to become literate. In such situations, the experience of »reading«, »re-reading« and »writing« its reality will sooner or later make the community want also to read and write words, when the acquisition of this knowledge has assumed real significance.

In other cases, cultural action begins with the spread of literacy itself. But it is essential that, as the population learns the language, it should be encouraged to commit itself to projects relating to the transformation of its reality. Dynamic interaction must be established between the cultural circles and experience in transforming reality in such a way that they can activate and stimulate each other.

To put it in a nutshell, an adult literacy programme will only succeed in being part of, and making a real contribution to, the reconstruction process to the extent that it is undertaken and perceived as a political act and an act of knowledge, closely linked to production and health, and not merely as a mechanical exercise in memorizing syllables and words.

World Education sent us a news release that on the next issues of their magazine »*Reports*« will have as a major theme »Towards a Fully Literate World«. It will look at the successes and failures of mass literacy campaigns and their prospects for achieving universal literacy. For more information please write to:

REPORTS Magazine, World Education, 210 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111, U.S.A.

Radio for Literacy.

A Reader on the Use of Radio in Literacy Programmes
introduced and compiled by Josef Müller

DSE has published this reader for their own workshops. However, they might be in a position to distribute copies to our readers as long as their stock lasts. Their address:

Hans-Böckler-Strasse 5, D-5300 Bonn 3, F.R.G.

Developed for use in SWAPO refugee centres in Angola and Zambia, the **Literacy Promoter's Handbook** explains a liberating methodology of adult education and community work, based on the experiences that Namibians have strong feelings about: hunger, bad water, exploitive labour, poor housing, and brutal policing... The literacy method (first developed by Paulo Freire in Latin America) is explained in a lively cartoon style, and this is followed by lesson outlines, each with a line drawing for discussion, and suggested discussion questions. Published in August 1986 by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia, PO Box 953, Luanda, People's Republic of Angola, and reprinted 1987 and published for SWAPO of Namibia by

Namibia Refugee Project, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF, Great Britain.

Yusuf O. Kassam

Literacy and development — What is missing in the jigsaw puzzle?

For about three decades now, exhilerated discussions and studies have continued to take place on the problem of mass adult literacy in the so-called developing countries. The national and international concern with the problem of illiteracy culminated in the convening of a World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy by Unesco in Teheran in 1965. As a result of the various discussions and analyses of the problem of mass illiteracy, adult educators, politicians, economists, and manpower planners have now taken for granted the casual relationship between illiteracy and underdevelopment. The relationship between illiteracy and underdevelopment is manifold and can be summarised as follows:

1. That in the modern world, an illiterate person is considerably circumscribed in playing his full potential role in the economic development of his country.

2. That he cannot participate fully and meaningfully in the social, civic, political and cultural activities of his community.

3. That he is forced to live a marginal and dehumanized existence.

4. That he is highly vulnerable to exploitation and oppression.

5. That he cannot achieve his individual liberation and realize self-actualization.

In spite of the intensive efforts in eradicating illiteracy in most of the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the overall picture of the world illiteracy situation is still distressing. For, according to Unesco surveys, while the percentage of illiteracy in the world has been declining, the total number of illiterates has increased. For example, between 1950 and 1970, the percentage of illiteracy declined from 44.3% to 34.2% but the actual number of illiterates has risen from 700 million to 783 million. Such a situation is accounted for by a number of reasons such as population explosion, lack of enough literacy programmes, lack of universal primary education, relapse into illiteracy, and so on.

The increasing number of illiterates is one side of the coin of the problem of illiteracy and the other side of the coin is whether or not there is a causal relationship between literacy and development. In tackling the total problem of illiteracy, different approaches and strategies have been adopted. The most common approach that has been used in many countries is the so-called 'traditional literacy' approach. The main objective of traditional approach to literacy teaching is to teach the adults the 3R's only and this is usually done through story-like primers or other subject matter unrelated to their daily work, hoping that these adults will then be able to use their newly-acquired skills to improve their lives. However, the experience of this approach has proved to be disenchanting in many countries. It was found for example, that traditional literacy did not arouse adequate motivation for the adults to want to become literate; most of those adults who did become literate could not make much use of their literacy skills meaningfully and beneficially; eventually, through the disuse of their literacy skills and by virtue of their generally illiterate environment, they relapsed into illiteracy.

As a result of the many shortcomings of traditional literacy, the concept of 'functional literacy' was developed and endorsed by the World Congress on Illiteracy in 1965 (see *Final Report: World Conference of Ministers of Education on the »Eradication of Illiteracy«, Teheran, 8 - 19 September, 1965, Unesco, 1965).* The basic proposition in the concept and programme of functional literacy revolves on the fact that if literacy has a *potential* role to play in generating development, then its impact could be greatly enhanced if it is made functional by relating it directly to the major economic activity of a given community and according to the national priorities of economic development. The crux of a functional literacy programme, in other words, is the simultaneous integration of literacy skills and vocational training on a selective and intensive basis.

The theory and hypothesis behind the concept of functional literacy sounds very appealing and convincing. But do the evaluations of the functional literacy projects in different countries show any evidence to prove whether the functional literacy approach is an effective method of generating socio-economic development? As far as the evaluation of the Tanzanian functional literacy project is concerned (see *Final Evaluation Report, UNDP-UNESCO Work-Oriented Adult Literacy Pilot Project in the Lake Regions of Tanzania, Mwanza, May, 1973)*, the evidence on such a question is not at all rosy. For example, the 1971 cotton programme of the Tanzanian project has shown that out of the 13 indicators of socio-economic development which were actually measured and whose results were reported in definite and precise terms, only 3 indicators or about 23% revealed a significant positive change at 0.01 level. These 3 indicators were: use of modern equipment and practices, nutrition habits and quantitative knowledge. 9 indicators or about 69% revealed an insignificant positive net change, these being, durable goods, consumptions, health practices, interest in education, level of socio-economic aspiration, participation in social and civic organizations, and health and nutrition knowledge. One indicator, namely, housing conditions, showed no positive net change at all. One may conclude, therefore, that the evaluation results do not indicate a definite and substantial improvement in the socio-economic life of the participants involved. The evaluation results indicate only a few and small tentative trends of change and improvement.

Some of the most important and crucial indicators such as production, productivity and income were not measured because they were found to be of enormous complexity. The Project treated the indicator relating to the use of modern equipment and practices as a 'proxy' measure of productivity, but such an exercise leaves much room for speculation.

On the attainment of literay itself, it was found that apart from some proficiency in arithmetic, the participants' performance was poor on the whole. Furthermore, the majority of the participants who had shown some measurable literacy skills had attained a Standard II level of literacy and not Standard IV level which was the operational objective of the Project. The revelation of the generally poor and low attainment in literacy challenges the hypothesis of the 'built-in motivation' of a functional literacy programme whereby it is argued that since the subject matter of the primer is directly related to the occupation of the learners, the need to become literate takes on a meaning and a purpose. Although the literacy performance was poor, the evaluation of the Project came up with a most interesting finding, namely, that participants tended to do better on vocational skills even with low performance on literacy.

However, it should be noted that the evaluation exercise that was carried out on the Tanzanian functional literacy project had to contend with a lot of problems and constraints. And in any case, it would probably seem quite reasonable to argue that the impact of a given educational programme on economic growth and social change is a long-term proposition. Substantial and discernable changes could be more realistically measured over time, and inducing change among rural peasant communities has not always proved easy anywhere.

Although the evaluation results of the functional literacy project in Tanzania have been rather discouraging, the fight against illiteracy should and must continue. For there is no doubt in my view that given a literate population, development can be greatly accelerated. Besides, literacy is a human right irrespective of its relationship to development. On the other hand, it is a myth to think that a person who is illiterate is not capable of learning a host of useful things or that he is not capable of achieving his own development and of contributing to national development. However, in talking about the causal relationship between literacy and development, a number of other important factors and variables tend to be overlooked. In other words, the eradication of illiteracy **per se** is not necessarily an automatic instrument of bringing about development. The questions to ask are: What are the various 'interrelationships' that weave around literacy and development? Let me summarize the possible answers to these questions in the following way: —

1. Not withstanding the 'built-in motivation' of the functional literacy approach, the rural peasants, first and foremost, need political mobilization and the awakening of their critical awareness of their environment. In the words of President Nyerere, the first objective of adult education in Tanzania is »to shake Tanzanians out of a resignation to the kind of life they have lived for centuries past« *(Julius K. Nyerere, »Adult Education Year« in: Freedom and Development, Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 137).* The psycho-social approach in literacy teaching as advocated by Paulo Freire *»Pedagogy of the Oppressed«, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970)* very much reflects the same point made by President Nyerere. Freire argues for the need of engaging the illiterate adults in the process of 'conscientization' which can change the adult's pessimistic and fatalistic perspective on reality and enable him to acquire a 'critical' vision of his environment and an awareness of his capacity and means to change his environment. I believe, therefore, that without this preliminary mobilization and consciousness raising of the people, literacy, be it

'functional' or what have you, cannot make its desired impact on peoples' development.

2. Teaching adults how to improve and increase their agricultural produce through functional literacy cannot be fully effective if the peasants in the first place cannot financially afford to adopt the recommended agricultural practices e.g., the use of fertilizers and insecticides. Furthermore, they tend to lose the incentive to produce more if the price offered for their products is very low while at the same time their buying power is considerably reduced by heavy inflation.

3. The peasants' efforts at increased agricultural productivity are hampered if their basic health and nutrition conditions remain poor.

4. Many developing countries are trapped in the vicious circle of economic dependence on the industrialized and capitalist countries. Such a dependence makes it difficult for the developing countries to build a 'self-centred' economy which could generate adequate surplus which in turn could be invested in producer goods in order to generate more surplus.

In the absence of a self-centred economy, literacy, and for that matter, education in general, does not really contribute to the development of the majority of the people. Consequently, to use a common phrase, the poor countries are becoming poorer and the rich countries continue to become richer. India is a classical example illustrating the fact that education alone cannot bring the desired development for the majority of the people in an economy that is 'outward-looking', i.e., not self-centred. For, on the one hand, India has mass illiteracy and, on the other hand, and paradoxically, it faces the problem of a surplus of a very highly educated people who cannot be absorbed in its own economy.

To conclude, while some development can take place without literacy, literacy does not automatically bring about development. Literacy, however, can greatly accelerate development under certain conditions. In other words, the causal relationship between literacy and development is not so simple and linear as some people tend to assume. The relationship is multi-dimensional and therefore depends on the interplay of a number of other factors and forces. Some of these factors or pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of literacy and development have been outlined above. But, of course, this list of factors is not exhaustive. Rather than make global generalizations on the relationship between literacy and development, there is probably a need to analyse such a relationship in the **total** context of a **given** country's political, economic, social and cultural forces.

The three illiterate men

Three illiterate men were asked to go and learn how to read and write. The men only stayed away for three days and returned, assuming that they had become literate. The Chief then asked for the three men to guard his gates. The three men who were assumed to be literate took up the post. One day, a man called Pa Kay gathered many good things to send to the Chief. When Pa Kay reached the first gate, the man at the gate asked him to stop and promise that whatever he got from the Chief would be shared with him before he would be allowed to pass through. Pa Kay agreed and promised to give the gateman twenty. The man at the gate never asked what the twenty meant, but allowed Pa Kay to pass with his signature on a piece of paper. The same thing happened at the other two gates, and Pa Kay continued to promise to give twenty to the other two guards.

When the Chief saw Pa Kay, he was so pleased that he decided to give him plenty of gold, diamonds and money. But Pa Kay refused to take any reward but asked that he should be given a hundred lashes of the cane. The Chief was very much surprised at this; but Pa Kay insisted on getting the lashes. The Chief then called his messenger to bring the cane and asked Pa Kay to lie on the floor. After he was given forty lashes, Pa Kay ordered the man with the cane to stop. He then asked the Chief to invite his first gates-man. When the Chief asked why, Pa Kay explained that he had an agreement with him. The Chief called for the gate keeper and when he came Pa Kay ordered the cane-man to give him twenty lashes. The keeper wanted to refuse; but Pa Kay took out the agreement paper and showed it to him. The Chief then ordered the cane-man to thrash the keeper giving him twenty strokes of the cane. The second and third gate-keeper were called and the same punishment was given to them. After the whole exercise, the three men decided to go and do actual learning.

The moral behind this short story is that to pretend to know when one doesn't know is dangerous.

collected by Abou Bay-Sheka, and published by the People's Educational Association of Sierra Leone, Freetown 1987, in »Fishing in Rivers of Sierra Leone. Oral Literature«, Stories and Songs from Sierra Leone No. 25, p. 218.

L.A. Okraku

Literacy and development

The second half of this century can be described as a period in which international concern for illiteracy was highlighted. This is a period in which many dependent countries gained independence from former colonial masters which led to a step up in development in these underdeveloped now developing countries. Illiteracy was identified as one of the major obstacles to development. The United Nations made funds, literacy material and technical expertise available for literacy campaigns in many developing countries. With the enthusiasm with which the mass literacy campaigns were tackled one would have hoped that by now the incidence of illiteracy in these countries would have been considerably reduced. Unfortunately, in many developing countries the contrary is the case.

Ghana is one of the countries that embraced mass literacy campaigns with vigour during the late 40s and throughout the 50s. Ghana's department for community development was characteristically named Mass Education Department and the personnel Mass Education Officers. Training of voluntary leaders in the Laubach technique was carried out extensively. Every community development project was preceded by a literacy class. Literacy days were colourful occasions which attracted both chiefs and subjects. But gradually the enthusiasm died down. Community development assumed more importance. School buildings, community centres, street drains, post offices, pit latrines, roads were a few of the projects that the department helped to initiate and carry out on a self-help basis.

Adult educationists in Ghana in the 1970s now mourn the absence of enthusiasm for mass literacy campaigns and the increase in the illiteracy rate in the country.

Now the university adult education department has shown keener interest in the programme and is prepared to cooperate with the relevant government department to tackle the problem once more. However, before a better result is achieved in the second assault on this problem of illiteracy it will be worthwhile our examining the cause of the failure of the first attempt.

Right from its inception nobody had any doubts that mere literacy was not the answer to development. What was needed was functional literacy. If literacy is to aid development then it must have something to do with the culture of the people as well as their production methods. I am sure the general poverty of developing countries will not make us forget that development must touch the whole personality of the individual, his values, etc. and not only the number of gadgets that his society possesses. When we limit our research to functionality in the sense that literacy must be related to the work of the new literates so that his new knowledge can be reflected in his work, the question then will be in which way the mass literacy campaign was related to the work of the new literates?

Who were the people against whom the campaigns were directed? The first and the biggest category was the rural adult. He was mostly a farmer, a fisherman, a craftsman. The second category was the unskilled worker in the urban areas. They included boys and girls who were too old to begin school and old men and women with fading eye-sight.

What did the reading material deal with? A casual glance through the 1st primers will reveal that the emphasis was to help the new literate to recognise letters and words. It had little to do with vocation. Perhaps a second phase would have taken care of the vocational aspect of the exercise. Reading and writing however did not make the old cocoa farmer who attended an evening literacy class, perhaps as a way of relaxation, produce better and more cocoa.

Neither could the fisherman bring in more catch because he was able to read and write. In fact there is no evidence that literate farmers produce more than the illiterates. There was no follow-up literature in agriculture or fishing which the new literate could read to improve his knowledge in his vocation. The instructions on the Gamalin 20 which the farmer used in spraying his cocoa are written in English in which he is illiterate. There is no local newspaper in the vernacular from which he can improve his knowledge in current and national affairs.

The next question then is to what use was the new literate expected to put his new-found knowledge. School leavers found salaried work. Unfortunately, the new literate's standard was not up to that level. Christians among the group could read the Bible and sing from the hymn books. The pagan did not have that advantage and they were not few. For all practical purposes then the literate found no use for his knowledge. Most of them quickly reverted to illiteracy. The mass education functionary realised the futility of his endeavours. Fortunately for him community development (project work) offered him an alternative. He drifted that way, perhaps unconsciously. The mass literacy campaign's »coffin« was gradually sealed. The functionaries became community development officer minus »mass education«.

How can the second attempt at mass literacy be made really functional so that it does not suffer the fate of its predecessor?

I here beg to offer a few suggestions.

1. Instead of merely mounting a country-wide campaign that will need the recruitment of all able-bodied literates as voluntary teachers I would suggest that various occupational groups should be first identified and the literacy programme in terms of literature and follow-up materials so prepared that both the teacher and the learner will know their goal. A pilot scheme may

first be carried out and when this succeeds, expanded to cover a wider area. Already formal education in many developing countries carries the tag of non-functionality, which has led to an increase in unemployment as many more children receive formal education. Adult Education can be spared this ordeal.

2. Well-prepared reading material should be produced before the campaign starts. This may be tested with a representative group before it is released for general use.

3. Well-trained personnel must be made to handle the teaching so that supervision and training of voluntary teachers can be more effectively done.

4. Vernacular newspapers must be produced so that the new literates can have reading material ready at hand. The size of the letters and the content of the newspapers must have the interest of the new literates in view.

5. Mass literacy must have a close collaboration with national development. The yardstick must be »How has an increase in the literacy rate helped the well-being of the individual and his society as a whole.«

Countries need not feel embarassed when official figures show a great proportion of illiterates. I am sure this embarassment in the past contributed much to the failure of previous campaigns because countries tended to emphasise the number of literates they had produced within a given period without bothering to evaluate the whole exercise in relation to development.

Johan Galtung presented this paper in 1975 as a contribution to the Persepolis Conference on Literacy and Adult Education. It also appeared in Convergence no. 4, 1975. This is a shortened version of the full text.

Johan Galtung

Literacy, education and schooling — for what?

What would happen if the whole world became literate? Answer: not so very much, for the world is by and large structured in such a way that it is capable of absorbing the impact. But if the whole world consisted of literate, autonomous, critical, constructive people, capable of translating ideas into action, individually or collectively — the world would change. And this is the topic being explored in this paper.

It may be useful to start with the distinction between schooling and education that is rapidly becoming commonplace. This is no sharp dichotomy; schooling obviously serves some educational purpose but there is, and should be, a concept of education much broader than that which is served at present by schooling. There are important dimensions along which schooling may be said to dilute, even pervert, the richer concept of education. Literacy stands in an interesting in-between position: it can serve as a launching pad for schooling but it can also be one among points of departure for education more broadly conceived of.

The broader meaning of literacy

If we see literacy as the beginning of education rather than as the first rung on a schooling ladder, what then would be the meaning of literacy?

Evidently, literacy means training in another type of structure both for the production and consumption of knowledge in a broad sense; a structure that is at the same time less vertical and less individualist. This means seeing the ability to enter into a dialogue as equal in importance to the ability to read and write. However, an important distinction should be made between dialogue and discussion or debate: the former is a dialectical method, for mutual enrichment and growth to arrive at some kind of synthesis; the latter is a form of regulated verbal warfare where the basic point is to win over somebody else. A more relaxed form of dialogue is the **conversation** which often may be a dialogue, or a debate for that matter, in disguise. It is a profoundly collective undertaking; it respects the other party fully; it is conducted in an atmosphere of respect with a view to mutual enrichment. Of course, it has an air of the bourgeois *salon* and is too polite to be a tool for social transformation — and yet, should it not enter our concept of literacy? Should not literacy be defined more broadly as **how to deal with words in a social setting,** not merely how to read and write them?

We would also argue in favour of knowing how to read and write **together**. The storyteller was an ancient role of tremendous importance partly destroyed through literacy. In this process the story as a social transaction between human beings disappeared — the book is and remains a rather indirect link between author and reader, between sender and receiver. Few people know how, together, to build on a story and create out of it something new.

So much about the form, what about the content?

If education is to be of any use in social transformation it obviously has to include facts and values, both knowledge of the empirical and the potential, with ample use of the values to criticize the empirical, and ample use of all kinds of knowledge to construct — using the precious tools of words that we humans have at our disposal — a better reality. Education should foster not only the empirical, but also the critical and the constructive mind; there is no contradiction here. To build on only one of them — usually choosing the empirical since it is least threatening and most consensus-oriented — is to promote a truncated, even castrated, type of knowledge.

Literacy relative to other fundamental needs

Literacy, whether defined narrowly or more broadly, is a fundamental need in a literate society. But what are the other needs, and how does literacy relate to them?

Take the usual list of fundamental needs: food, habitat, clothes, health, and then education at its minimum conceived of as literacy. It is easily seen how literacy narrowly conceived of is instrumental to the satisfaction of these needs when the list is that short. Thus, if food becomes a question of reading recipes for increasingly industrialized food-making, habitat a question of signing a contract and being sufficiently knowledgeable of numbers and letters to locate one's own dwelling among similar looking ones, clothes a question of shopping and understanding advertising and health a question of reading instructions of hygiene — well, then it all combines relatively well. But underneath this smooth surface there are very substantial problems, and they all relate more or less directly to the problem of what is meant by literacy and education.

First, there is the idea of giving a deeper meaning to the fundamental needs. There is a basic structural similarity (»isomorphism« to use the technical term) between being made literate on the one hand, and being fed, sheltered, clad, and protected on the other. In all cases one is receiver, a client, being taken care of by nutritionists and food-makers, by town planners and architects, by manufacturers of clothing, by sanitation engineers and physicians. There is a whole army with tertiary education to take care of you — once you are willing and able to read their instructions! But what is significant is that for all these fields there is something corresponding to the schooling vs. education dilemma, with the former standing for a more quantitative and the latter for a more qualitative approach and having autonomy and sharing as basic ingredients. The point, one might emphasize, is not so much the precise content of the texts one reads after one has become literate as the structure literacy leads one into, whether it is of the schooling or education varieties — **for the structure is the major message.** Since schooling/education fills increasingly large parts of people's lives that structural message will dominate people in their social behaviour and have spill-over effects that could lead to a much higher quality of life if the education paradigm is made more dominant.

Second, there are all the other needs; life is not limited to those five alone. How do the two types of literacy relate to these near-fundamental needs? It depends on which they are and here there is much less consensus. But why is there less consensus? Partly because the needs already mentioned **can** be handled in a way totally consonant with a centralized, standardized, vertical nation-state of fragmented individuals whereas this is clearly not the case for other needs. Take **work**, for instance, interpreted not merely as a job with a guaranteed minimum income so as to insure the satisfaction of basic needs, but as an opportunity to express, to create, to engage in praxis. Today this privilege is probably reserved for a small elite of intellectuals, artists and some others. In a society less bent on standardized production and consumption it could be the birthright of everybody and literacy could become functional for everybody. Or take **freedom**, that holy word which is being usurped precisely by those societies that talk most about it: it should mean more than freedom to choose, as a passive consumer, between different TV channels or newspapers. It must also imply the freedom to create; but that means an emphasis from the very beginning on creativity rather than on receptivity; on education rather than on schooling.

A very important aspect of literacy is freedom of expression. Even in a relatively non-creative way, it is meaningless unless the media are available. In modern society one is only permitted to communicate to selected, specific receivers. Letters and stamps, telephone calls can be afforded by many, if not by all or even by most, for the letters need an address and the telephone call needs a number. Only the establishment, or selected individuals, are permitted to communicate with unspecified audiences, even the nation as a whole, and beyond that. The ordinary person may not even put up a poster on the town square without permission, even not in countries that boast a high level of freedom of expression. The point is not that everybody should have prime time on television but that literacy should find more non-privatized outlets that can be afforded by people in general. One possibility is precisely the wall poster — a major Chinese contribution to freedom of expression; another is to make mimeograph and photocopy services available free of charge to everybody, in addition to cable TV and FM radio-senders. Do this, and literacy would immediately become much more meaningful.

This also has implications for the next need in line: the need for **politics**; not merely as a social institution, but as an instrument to shape society and hence as a social need. We are thinking of it precisely as a human need, as the need for participation in shaping the conditions of one's own living. To engage actively in politics is to do exactly all those things that we have mentioned under education, and particularly under the broad concept of literacy, whereas schooling would make for citizens who know how to read party programmes, and literacy would create people below that, but at least able to behave adequately on election day. Hence, parliamentarism is to real politics what schooling is to real education, which is what the narrow concept of literacy is to the broad concept — which in turn is what stones are to bread.

We could continue this list of needs, but it all leads to the same conclusion. Thus, is there not a **need for togetherness**, also having such expressions as friendship and love? Is there not a **need for joy and for giving joy to others**; and is talking together not one, by no means the only one, such source of joy? What about the **need for having a meaning within one's life?** Can that really be reconciled with the kind of structure and content associated with schooling? Among all of these dimensions the broad concept of literacy is not only a necessary component; it is so central in the whole social nexus that it comes close to being a major causal factor. To the extent this is true, the important question is how that concept is better promoted, in theory and practice. To that we now turn.

Conclusion: some strategies

1. Literacy training must no longer be seen as a question of how to train the largest number as quickly as possible and as inexpensively per head as possible. More attention must be given to the social structure in which it takes place, and the content of the first verbal messages to be mastered. The structure should be

decentralized, close to real life situations, carried out at work if possible, and by equals as much as possible. The content should have maximum relevance; verbal examples should not be contrived; literacy should be experienced as a magnificent instrument to express and understand important things, not as a goal in itself — then it becomes a fetish.

2. Literacy training must include a large variety of training programmes in what to do with words, such as composing posters, carrying on dialogue, composing letters-to-the-editor, commenting on and criticizing radio programmes, behaving in meetings, even when reading and writing are not directly involved. Maybe a new term should be invented to distinguish between the narrow and the broad concept, retaining »literacy« only for the former.

3. The type of exercises mentioned above should have carry-over effects into schools. One vehicle of transformation might be to give recently alphabetized adults more access to ordinary schools so that their higher level of experience can mix with the more formal training possessed by the children.

4. Even given all of the above, a basic condition for literacy to become functional — and not only a question of learning and forgetting equally or even more more quickly — would be for society to undergo some transformation, particularly of more administrative decentralization and more economic self-reliance at the local level. For this to happen considerably more than literacy campaigns is needed, although they may be important instruments. **For just as the structure is the basic message, the content is defined through the use,** and the use will have to be meaningful, that is, ultimately bordering on or getting into some kind of politics. But this presupposes a sense of local self-respect, which in turn presupposes some kind of **knowledge reform** — not too different from a land

reform — whereby the monopolizers of knowledge-production, such as universities, experts etc., are willing to distribute the tools of knowledge better, and people in general dare to respect their own insights more.

So, what would happen if the whole world became literate? Quite a lot, in fact, if we dare define it broadly enough and take the consequence of trusting the people who are given, and themselves develop further, the tools of reading and writing.

Heribert Hinzen / Jakob Horn / Wolfgang Leumer / Rolf Niemann

Cooperating or campaigning for literacy: Let's remove doubtful promises and cope with the practicable

In the past few years a new dimension seems to have been given to the discussion about literacy and the »eradication of illiteracy«.

Illiteracy=ignorance=indignity: a wrong equation

Active as we are in the field of adult education and development, we deplore the fact that many of our colleagues are increasingly referring to illiterates and ignorant, to illiteracy as an indignity to mankind, and at the same time assuming that illiteracy is the cause of oppression, exploitation and further impoverishment. It is even more deplorable to find this attitude in official declarations, reports and so-called research pamphlets that pretend to offer insight and guidance, but which, in fact, are misleading in many respects.

The kind of **despair** felt by many of us in the face of the ever-increasing misery in the world and ever-widening gaps between the haves and have-nots should not become an excuse for a wrong analysis, and can never become a justification for the mere repetition of slogans that will not hold water when confronted with a thorough examination of our insights and day-to-day experiences.

Causality: appearances are deceptive

As far as the presumption of causality is concerned — correlation and inter-dependence are not equal to causality — there is no general proved evidence that literacy

- in historical terms was a prerequisite of economic and social development. In fact **historically** in Europe and other industralized countries widespread literacy **followed** the industrial revolution, and they reinforced each other.
- Nor is there any general evidence that **literacy efforts by themselves** have diminished exploitation and poverty in the so-called literate societies.
- The fact that the frequently cited **maps of poverty and illiteracy** coincide is no proof that literacy is the determining factor for the distribution of wealth within a given society or between nations.
- Many examples have shown that ever-increasing efforts for and large expenditure on literacy did **not necessarily** lead to a **reduction of poverty**.
- **Literacy and intelligence** are both context bound, literacy is not a prerequisite for intelligent understanding and handling of life. Literacy becomes a necessary, or at least an enabling skill, for the individual in a literate environment.
- There is also no direct relationship between **literacy and the attainment of participative structures** and general human values, literacy is not the exclusive or even self-sufficient skill for liberation and self-realization, or for the abolishment of oppression.

Literacy: the good, the bad and the ugly

Those who still propound the argument that literacy finally leads to the enlightenment of individuals and/or mankind should keep in mind that the terrifying arms race and destruction of unrenewable natural resources, which endanger the existence of our world, are not perpetrated by illiterates, but are only possible through literacy and highly literate specialists — although again, this should not be mistaken as a causal relationship.

We should also bear in mind — without taking a romantic view of illiterate communities — that **non-literate societies** have produced and still produce positive, indigenous values and techniques for the satisfaction of basic needs and human enrichment, which are important and appropriate now and may become more decisive in the future. Are we fully aware and concerned about the harmful and often **destructive potential of our literacy endeavours** and the indirect, negative influences and repercussions on developmental processes which are apparent in phenomena like rural exodus, negligence of traditional skills and cultural heritages bound to non-written transfer from generation to generation?

We do see a perspective for **integrated literacy work** as part of a more comprehensive concept of adult education and development which takes adults — literates and illiterates alike — seriously in their realization of their lives, and which remains open to the question of whether literacy can be meaningful or even a tool for change. Whether literacy is a necessary or helpful tool for the improvement of living conditions can only be assessed **according to the specific prevailing situation**. Assessment and decision have to be based on the experience and knowledge of those who are concerned and directly involved.

Our experience shows clearly that adult education and local development can often be effected **without** literacy skills and that the need for literacy may only arise **during or even after** the performance of activities by a given community or the society at large. In imposing literacy above all as a precondition we could be opposing our own objectives by demotivating the learners and leading to failure; the demotivation effect may be permanent and irreversible.

Literacy, like any other means in the development of the individual, the community and the society has to be a socially appropriate »technology«. A largely literate environment produces the necessity for additional literacy efforts. Adult education must make provision for motivated learners and try to satisfy their demands.

Reality versus wishful thinking

Let us be honest and realistic: No matter what efforts are made — unless the world, North and South, West and East, and the rich, elite and powerful within countries are prepared for an alternative orientation and a total shift of financial resources from arms' budgets to basic services — illiteracy will be a fact of life even after the year 2000. Therefore the call for »eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000« is misleading and an **unrealistic objective**. It is an illusion and not a meaningful utopia. Moreover, it is a discrimination and an insult for those who will continue to master their lives as illiterates or non-literates.

Illiteracy is not a fatal disease which requires a »vaccination programme« for its eradication. On the contrary, literacy work needs a careful, sensitive and sensible choice of pedagogical approaches, neither hand-outs nor injections will help.

Campaigns: yes and/or no?

Taking these insights and experiences seriously we must confess that we do not see the possibility nor necessity for either an immediate confrontative approach or for literacy campaigns as a strategy for **everyone and everywhere at present.**

Will not the characteristics of centralization, which are part and parcel of campaigns, jeopardize very important essentials of adult education, namely **participation** and self-determination?

Above all have not most of all past campaigns shown that the larger the campaign the more **insurmountable difficulties** grew in respect to functionality, training of literacy personnel, production of materials in meaningful quantities and qualities, transport etc. etc.?

Nevertheless, we do see two other aspects and uses of campaigns:

- Campaigns for information, creation of public awareness and motivation of literacy.
- Literacy campaigns in the context of far reaching changes or revolutions in society — a context which adult education cannot presuppose, nor create by itself, nor await.

Continuity in cooperation

We are conscious of the interrelation between adult education and development. Therefore we shall **continue to support** adult education and literacy in our own country and in the framework of international cooperation. In our international work our **prime concern** will continue to be the improvement of the living conditions of the poor who form the majority in Africa, Asia and Latin America through adult education, while recognizing the limitations of education for the development process. At the same time we realize our quantitatative limitations faced by this huge task, although the last decade has shown a favourable increase of resources for our work in cooperation with our adult education partners.

We are of the opinion that it is better to **continue with the present diversity of modest approaches in literacy work**, embedded in many other activities of non-formal education and development.

Invitation to dialogue

We would appreciate an **open dialogue** on the issue of »literacy for development« which would stimulate the theory and practice of adult education alike for the benefit of the learners. We ask our readers to send their experiences, studies and comments to us through the editors' address.

On est toujours l'enfant
de quelqu'un

We are always the child
of someone

Siempre se es el hijo
de alguien

Beaumarchais

Tom Mulusa is the Director of the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies at the College of Adult and Distance Education, University of Nairobi. His article was written in response to our invitation to continue the literacy debate.

T. Mulusa

The international adult literacy inertia

Introduction

The growing number of illiterate people in the world is only one of the indicators of a state of inertia in the international adult literacy movement. Another indicator of inertia, which is the focus of this article, is the apparent inability of literacy workers and their supporters to reinterpret literacy concepts and to attach new meaning to them at the operational level.

An article entitled »Cooperating or campaigning for literacy: Let's remove doubtful promises and cope with the practicable« in the September 1983 issue of **Adult Education and Development** attempted with limited success to initiate dialogue on the nature and trend of the international literacy campaign. The responses to this challenge tended to side-track from the main issues and to make political protests that are familiar to those of us from the Third World countries such as: »If you do not support our views you must be against us«, or »This is a Third World phenomenon, and if you are not from the Third World then you do not know what it feels like to live in an illiterate community«.

The authors of the article raised questions which should have generated debate on the following issues: What is literacy? Is illiteracy ignorance or are illiterates ignorant? Does illiteracy cause oppression or drive a people to oppression? Does literacy cause socio-economic development or eradicate poverty? Does the literacy movement serve illiterate people or is it a second chance for semi-literates? Does literacy produce justice and fairplay? Are the goals set for eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000 realistic? Can illiteracy be eradicated anyway?

These questions, and many more on the international adult literacy movement, must be asked and answered to get the fight against illiteracy moving. Obviously some of these questions seem to undermine the foundations of the established assumptions about the nature of illiteracy and the trend in the development of the international literacy movement. The international literacy movement for example has tended to be expressed in high sounding rhetoric which does not give details of what is actually taking place in the field.

Over the past four decades, the literacy movement has adopted several approaches. Four main approaches are examined below: i.e. **fundamental education, functional literacy, basic education** and **liberating and popular education.** What seems to have happened is that literacy workers and their supporters have shifted from one approach to another without establishing the weaknesses and strengths of whatever approach has been abandoned. It seems that the approaches referred to above were not sufficiently broken down to operational activities which made meaning to grass-roots literacy workers and their learners as illustrated below.

Fundamental education

Before UNESCO came into being, literacy simply meant teaching people how to read and write. Government and non-government development agencies throughout the world recognized the importance of reading and writing skills in the development of individuals and communities and spent considerable resources in promoting literacy.

From this inception, UNESCO played a leading role in the coordination of the international literacy campaign, and under its leadership the definition of literacy was expanded to include a wide range of knowledge and practical skills. The broadened literacy programme, known as fundamental education, was rooted in the colonial community development strategy. The skills and knowledge embedded in fundamental education were expected to add a new flavour to the literacy campaign which would attract and retain learners until they had become literate.

For a period of twenty years when fundamental education was the main strategy, the number of illiterates in the world continued to grow, the few learners who participated in the literacy movement made no dramatic improvements to their quality of life and literacy workers neither gained new understanding of illiteracy nor evolved new methods of teaching illiterates. Without searching for the weaknesses of the fundamental education approach, the international community abandoned it and adopted a new approach known as **functional literacy.**

Functional literacy

In 1964 UNESCO launched the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) to make literacy an effective tool in development. Functional literacy was derived from the post-independence theory of the Third World countries which stressed economic production more than fundamental education strategy. In many other respects there were no significant differences in the goals, process and anticipated outcome of the two approaches.

Like fundamental education, functional literacy was expected to attract and sustain the interest of the learner because of the utility of the functional content in the programme. It was assumed that the utility of the skills imparted would immediately be converted into goods and services that would improve the lives of the learners. Like fundamental education the content and teaching process of functional literacy were not spelt out clearly.

The functional literacy approach was endorsed by the World Conference of Ministers of Education on Eradication of Illiteracy held in Teheran in 1965. However, within ten years, it was clear that functional literacy did not provide solutions to the problems of illiteracy.

Basic education

Basic education is associated with the basic needs approach proposed by economic planners during the 1970s to alleviate poverty among the poor and disadvantaged groups and individuals in the Third World countries. The basic needs for human survival were listed by the basic needs economists as food, education, health care, water and housing. The basic needs strategy specifies the quality and quantity of these needs required to provide minimum standards of living.

The basic education component of the basic needs strategy was defined as »rural literacy«. The specific contents of rural literacy are, however, not precisely spelled out.

Liberating education and popular education

Liberating education is based on Paulo Freire's »Conscientization« ideology which is rooted in Marxism, existentialism and other humanistic theories. In Paulo Freire's ideology the illiterates are seen as an oppressed people. The function of literacy, therefore, is to enable the illiterates to realize their condition and to take action in liberating themselves from their oppressors.

Popular education is one of the recent developments of Freirean conscientization. Like conscientization, popular education has its greatest influence in South America.

Both conscientization and popular education are concerned with the cultural, political, economic and psychological transformation of the illiterate people. The skill to read and write is only one of the several goals that conscientization and popular education seek to achieve.

There are numerous contradictions in conscientization and popular education which are not explained. The proponents do not explain why the literates should oppress the illiterate and why educators should give their learners literacy, which seems to be inherently evil at least to the extent that the literate tend to oppress the illiterate. However, the weakest point in this approach ist that it is not clear from the literature how this system of education is translated into learning activities and how the impact is assessed.

The scope of literacy programmes

The outline given above is not intended (1) to map out all the labels given to literacy approaches during the past four decades, (2) to give an historically accurate exposition of the evolution of the main literacy approaches or (3) to explain and assess the theoretical soundness of the approaches. The main concern here is to investigate whether an effort was made to translate the political rhetoric in which literacy approaches were expressed into educational policies and programmes and to specific learning units.

The author has taken a particular interest in the analysis, interpretation and simplification of educational rhetoric into simple curricular, learning materials and learning activities as a result of ten years of teaching adult educators from Kenya and the neighbouring countries how to evaluate literacy and other educational and development programmes. Invariably, the trainees have had difficulty in articulating the objectives of their programmes and identifying the indicators of performance, proficiency or achievement. All too often senior literacy workers have been observed to list such things as crop yields, keeping exotic animals, building good houses, operating bank accounts and eating a balanced diet as indicators of a successful literacy campaign.

Obviously, a literacy programme would have effects on the thinking and habits of a neoliterate which would indirectly influence the development activities of the neoliterate. But to measure the level of literacy in terms of bags of grain, heads of cattle, and the fatness of an individual's bank account, with little or no reference to the ability to read and write, is naive to the extreme.

One would like to go further and raise questions on how literacy has been measured in all the success cases which have been quoted throughout the world. What was achieved in Cuba or Tanzania, was it socialist education or reading and writing? Was literacy the moving force in the development of these countries, or was it a beneficiary of a more powerful underlying socialist ideology? Were the neoliterates in these countries former illiterates or were they, as is evident in other countries, school drop-outs who saw the literacy programme as a chance to acquire the certificate they had missed at school, or those who simply use the programme to pass time and to socialize? The world has not learned from these success stories because we are not quite sure whether it is literacy which succeeded or whether literacy was only seen to succeed as a result of other changes.

Conclusions

Some of the thinkers and writers who have done most to articulate the importance, purposes and effects of literacy may surprisingly also make up the stumbling block to the international literacy movement. By confining the discussion of literacy to the ideological level of abstraction, and inhibiting the evolution of meaningful policies, programmes and learning activities at lower levels, they may have contributed a great deal to the state of inertia in the literacy movement.

Clearly there has ben a vaccum between the literacy politicians, the international conferences and research papers on the one hand and the grassroots functionaries on the other. This is the level at which the professionals should interpret political rhetoric into educational programmes. In the formal school sector, it is now understood that school education does not always increase food, provide clean water, expand health care and educational facilities and generally increase human happiness. The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) seems to have done more for the school system than it has done for adult literacy in clarifying the results of education. Perhaps adult education should have had its own IIEP.

At the national level, there is need for curriculum and material development centres to adjust internationally approved strategies to local situations. There is no doubt that such units do exist in some countries. What may be in doubt is whether the people who man the units have had any formal training in curriculum development and evaluation. In many Third World countries such professionals do not exist and the tendency is normally to pick primary education teachers to do the job. After all primary school teachers are involved in some kind of literacy work and the task of teaching illiterates does not appear to be difficult for a teacher with low academic and professional qualifications to handle.

What is not realized is that the secondary school and primary school teacher works in a system where the broad goals of education have been analysed and broken down into simple and straightforward educational content. They do not have to grapple with explaining how arithmetic, history or biology makes a good citizen or a professional worker. In literacy work the teacher is expected to transpose educational goals into educational content, and then synthesize what has been learnt into development.

The state of inertia observed in the international adult literacy movement is in part an indication of the lack of professional organs both at the international and national levels to analyse, interpret and simplify adult literacy goals into educational programmes and activities which adult educators and their learners can relate to. The individual practitioners who venture to question the established assumptions in adult literacy are always regarded as rebels. And anyway the contributions of individual practitioners through short articles in journals and conference papers tend to be sporadic and incapable of producing consistent guidance to practioners.

Changes in adult education fashions during the past four decades from fundamental education to functional literacy, non-formal education, basic education and popular education are not inherently a bad thing. In fact integrating the adult education approach into the popular development theory is a positive strategy. Our appeal is that the adult education or adult literacy component should not remain at the conceptual level. It should be interpreted into simple and realistic policies and principles which can then be translated into learning activities.

What seems to have been wrong with adopting new literacy fashions was the inability to analyse the fashions and to reduce them to very specific statements of purpose and method. Similarly, when it became necessary to abandon any one fashion, not much evaluation was undertaken to establish the elements of the rejected fashion which did not work. The movement just drifted from one approach to another, often repeating the same activities under different names.

There are many problems which inhibit the development of the international literacy movement. The state of inertia as proposed here is only one of the major factors that have tended to defuse the literacy movement.

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This paper was a contribution to an international seminar on »Cooperating for Literacy« organized by the German Foundation for International Development / DSE and the International Council for Adult Education / ICAE in Berlin (West) in October 1983. Although it is now five years old and some of the figures may need to be revised or updated, we think that it presents several key issues for further debate.

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Paul Wangoola

The political economy of illiteracy: A global analysis of myth and reality about its eradication

I.

Introduction

According to the UNESCO *Estimates and Projections of Illiteracy* (1978),[1] the adult population (aged 15 and over) will more than double between 1950 and 1990. At the same time the number of adult literates is expected to nearly triple, from 879 to 2,500 million. However, within the same forty-year period the illiterate population would increase from 700 to 884 million. According to these estimates therefore, the illiteracy rate is projected to drop from 44.3% in 1950 to 25.7% in 1990. The 1980 estimates which put the world illiterate total at 814 million, representing 28.9% of the adult population, seem to vindicate the UNESCO projections. Hopes in the victory against illiteracy are raised further by the fact that UNESCO estimates make no allowance for the effects of mass literacy campaigns.

However, behind the world figures of illiterates their uneven distribution is hidden. In 1970 Central South Asia accounted for 38.6% of the world's total illiterates, and is projected to increase its share to 43.5% in 1990. Asia as a whole had 73% of the illiterates in 1970, and this percentage is projected to rise to 74% in 1990. Africa's respective figures are 18.7% and 19%; and Latin America's 6.1% and 4.5%. In other words, during this period, Africa, Asia and Latin America together account for over 97% of the world's illiterates. Of the countries therefore, it is the poor countries which bear the burden of illiteracy. But this is not all; within countries it is the oppressed, poor peoples, often euphemistically referred to as the »disadvantaged«, who are illiterate. Clearly therefore, the Third World constitutes the main theatre of the war against illiteracy, and it is here that victory has to be scored.

Summary of the argument

The central argument in this paper is that literacy must be looked at historically and dialectically. Historically, it was the requirements of industry, of the industrial revolution, which dictated the need for literacy and made it necessary and compulsory for the vast majority of the people in Western Europe. There was simply no way an industrial economy could be managed and serviced without literacy. But not only this, the massive development of the productive forces brought about by the industrial revolution, that is to say, capitalist development, created immense surplus wealth, some of which could be and was diverted to pay for the considerable cost of making and keeping millions literate.

Capitalist development made the countries of Western Europe powerful; it also made it necessary for them to take control of the backward countries of the world and put their peoples and resources at their service. It was in the interest of the capitalist countries which had now turned imperialist, not to allow the full development of the productive forces in the colonies (and neo-colonies). Only a limited development and application of productive forces was allowed, in conformity with the needs of imperialism. The result was that no industrial revolution could take place in the colonies, later to become the Third World. Because the full blossom of productive forces could not be allowed, the need for literacy was correspondingly limited. Further, the stunted development of the forces of production meant that a comparatively limited surplus wealth was produced and available to foot the cost of making and keeping millions in the Third World literate. But what is more, all the surplus wealth produced was and continues to be siphoned off to the imperialist countries.

Under the above circumstances, the Third World has neither the need nor the capacity to pay for and service universal literacy.

What is illiteracy?

Literacy is variously measured and defined. One criterion used are national registers and other documents which require signatures. The entry of crosses or thumb prints instead of signatures can be used to determine the level of literacy. Fairly recently, the developed countries discovered another category of illiterates; the functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy in the developed countries is separate from and in addition to »pure illiteracy«. The functionally illiterate number millions; they are people who are unable to perform all the activities for which literacy is a prerequisite, for example operating a washing machine. This may be the result of new literacy-based activities, unfamiliar to the persons concerned, being added to general daily life; or it may be that the individuals in question never acquired a literacy level high enough to be able to perform such operations; or that at the time of graduation they actually attained an adquately high level of literacy but for various reasons have since deteriorated. But UNESCO, always with some good definition in the bag, has addressed itself to the problem of literacy as follows: »A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.«

The point to draw out of all this is that there is no monolithic definition, criteria or measurement of literacy for all time and for all places. As such, therefore, literacy is **time specific and country specific.**

The attack against illiteracy

Since the re-emergence of illiteracy in the developed countries, it has taken on a truly international form. Virtually all the countries of the world have had, plan to have or have an on-going programme to combat illiteracy. However, its distribution (see introduction above) clearly shows that the victory against illiteracy will be scored in the Third World.

The progress of the war against illiteracy in the Third World, therefore, gives a clear picture of the prospects of its eradication. In 1980, for example, Brazil had 7.4 million illiterates, instead of 18.1 if she had had no literacy programmes during the 1970's. This represented an illiteracy rate of 10% instead of the UNESCO projection of 24.5%. India launched a massive literacy programme in 1978 aimed to reach 100 million illiterates by the end of 1983/84 period. The Indian programme is targeted at less than half of the total number of illiterates. But even if it had a 70% success, this would still be a considerable dent against illiteracy. In Tanzania 5.4 million people aged ten and above were illiterate. This represented an illiteracy rate of 67% in 1967. But due to mass literacy campaigns the actual rate came down to 21% in 1980 (compared to UNESCO's projection of 15%).[2]

Admittedly, there are problems of figures and reporting on literacy. This is especially so when the source of figures and information is also the agency which takes the credit or blame for the literacy drive. But what is not in doubt is the seriousness with which some programmes of the struggle against illiteracy are taken. At the same time there is a general international mood against illiteracy. One of UNESCO's current main areas of thrust, for example, is the eradication of illiteracy. The UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA), in a document prepared for a regional Technical Meeting in Bamako, Mali (December 1982), called for the intensification of the struggle against illiteracy in Africa so as to eradicate it by the year 2000. Earlier on in the year the Udaipur Declaration had called for the eradication of illiteracy world-wide by the year 2000. A question which becomes topical is, can illiteracy be banished from the face of the earth?

Literacy in man's development

I propose to answer the question posed in the last sentence of the last paragraph historically, gradually, and in steps.

As we approach the year 2000 concern about illiteracy mounts. With eyes focused on the future we may not readily realise that while man has inhabited the earth for over half a million years, he has had literacy for only a few thousand years. But even then, especially before the modern age, the distribution of literacy within and between communities was extremely thin and uneven, so that for a very long part of that short period literacy has been with us, only a tiny minority has been literate. A great deal of man's major historical developments and achievements therefore, were recorded during the pre-literacy times. Widespread literacy and the international concern about illiteracy are products of the industrial revolution.

The industrial revolution marks a definite stage in man's development. It marked and testified to the decay of the feudal system and with it the overthrow of the aristocracy. Concurrently the industrial revolution heralded the rise of capitalism, the nation-state, and with this the supremacy of a new class: the bourgeoisie. These momentous events first occurred in England, starting in the seventeenth century. Later this phenomenon spread to the European continent, so that by 1850 – 1860 capitalism, and with it, the bourgeoisie, were squarely in the saddle and probably at their peak.

The industrial revolution is very significant in man's history. It unleashed the productive forces to a degree hitherto unprecedented, and afforded man massive control and direction over nature. In so doing the industrial revolution phenomenally cut down the cost of production of the means of man's subsistence, and for the first time put within easy reach a world without hunger, ignorance or disease. On this point of increased production and productivity none would be more qualified to bear testimony to it than Robert Owen, a successful manufacturer who, on the basis of practical experience in his New Lanark model factory (1800 – 1829) observed:

> *The working part of this population of 2500 persons was daily producing as much real wealth for society as, less than half a*

> *century before, it would have required the working part of population of 600,000 to create.*[3]

Since the days of Owen, the productive forces have been doubled over and over again, so that in 1929 Stuart Chase in his *Machines and Man* estimated the machine power of the world as representing the muscular power of nine billion additional men, or the equivalent of five slaves for every man, woman and child of the human race. But this is not all; for there can be no doubt that the technological developments since 1929 theoretically put at the disposal of every man, woman and child of the human race in the 1980's a number of slaves several time that of 1929.

The above facts about the industrial revolution are gone into because for those who are born in it there is the temptation of taking it for granted. But the truth is that the industrial revolution was and remains a momentous stage in man's history. Today no economic, political or social phenomenon can be grasped without a clear understanding of capitalism and the nation, countries and classes it has called into being, as well as the relations between them. It is also widely recognised that capitalism in crisis transformed itself into imperialism. Today few would not recognise that imperialism is in crisis. At the same time there is no doubt that imperialism is in control of the world in general, it is the reigning stage in man's development. This is why I propose to analyse illiteracy and examine the possibilities of its eradication within the context of the capitalist/imperialist »machine age«.

Literacy as epoch-specific

In its all-round context, it seems more correct to describe literacy as epoch-specific. Each epoch has its own forces, general laws and momentum which together make certain phenomena mandatory, others possible, in varying degrees, depending on the concrete conditions. With regard to literacy, literacy needs vary from time to time and from country to country. During the modern epoch of capitalism in general, but in particular the epoch of imperialism, the countries of the world are given. However, within these countries literacy needs vary further, depending on geographical location, rural or urban; and further, rural rich or poor. Ultimately literacy needs will be determined by class position.

We analyse literacy in the context of capitalism because widespread literacy is the product of this age, as is the dream to eradicate illiteracy worldwide. Today literacy is widespread in the First and Second worlds,[4] so that only a minority of the adult population in North America and Europe are illiterate. The Soviet Union eradicated illiteracy after the October Revolution and during socialist reconstruction. The re-emergence of illiteracy in the Soviet Union, as in Europe and North America, is yet to be discerned.[5]

Another hallmark of the capitalist epoch, as we have seen above, is the massive development of productive forces, especially machine power. But as illiteracy is unevenly distributed so are the productive forces, most of them being concentrated in North America, the Soviet Union, Europe and Japan.

The twin concentration of the productive forces and literacy has led understandably, but erroneously, to numerous studies which claim a **causal** relationship between the two. The popular conclusion has been that widespread literacy was the key, the pre-requisite for Europe's and North America's modern development.

The implication for the Third World has been obvious. In order to develop, apply and manage the productive forces and thus escape the grinding poverty, the Third World has first to make her population literate. Since the task is massive and urgent, its accomplishment must be two-pronged. First through massive formal educational provision, leading to universal primary education (UPE) on the one hand, and on the other, concurrent mass, literacy campaigns to cater for adults who will not have gone through school, or those who went through the formal school system but for various reasons have since lapsed into illiteracy. Otherwise, as according to Abdum Noor, »by remaining a victim of ignorance [another important assumption being that to be illiterate is to be ignorant and by implication the vice-versa — PW] an individual limits his contribution to the productive work of, and draws little benefit from, the society to which he belongs.«[6] The same argument is »logically« applied to districts, provinces, nations and regions. That way the complex problem of exploitation, poverty and the relations between peoples, nations, countries and classes is neatly reduced to a *World Education Crisis* (Coombs, 1968); although in this respect not quite education in general but literacy in particular. In reality what appears as an educational crisis is merely symptomatic of the general crisis of imperialism.

The World Bank is one of the chief exponents of the general crisis of imperialism as a crisis of education. For example Norman L. Hicks of the **World Bank** in *»A Note on the Linkage between Needs and Growth« (Prospects,* p. 164)[7] arrives at amazing conclusions. One of them is that »the levels of literacy explain the variations in life expectancy among countries **more fully** than do variables such as **gross national product (GNP), caloric and protein consumption, the number of doctors per capita, and the accessability of clean drinking water«!** [Emphasis not in the original.] Such are the exclusive wonders attributed to literacy that even the fall of the Shah of Iran's dictatorship was the result of »well-published governmental efforts to increase national literacy« *(Prospects,* p. 183) — a clear example of the dictatorship's own grave-digging; and perhaps also a good example of how neo-literates outwitted graduates!

Some of the one-sided studies at best amount to fireside stories, and at worst myths. But like all fireside stories and myths they contain a grain of truth, although far removed from reality. Abdun Noor himself points out that while recent studies have »clarified the complex but tenous relations« (between literacy and development) they have nonetheless fallen short of »fully explaining them«. But if literacy is to be meaningfully used as a tool for development, we cannot for long afford not to be able to fully explain the relationship between the two. With numerous literacy campaigns underway, and others in the pipeline, all in the name of »development«, a clear understanding of the relationship between literacy and development has become even more urgent — or else billions of dollars could be on the brink of being spent in the name of unattainable goals.

One major reason for the failure to »fully explain« the relationship between literacy and development is that studies have tended to focus on the Third World, with only passing reference, if any at all, to the First and Second Worlds. The assumption is obvious: here the relationship is a »settled« matter; »literacy was the precursor of development«. It is further assumed that illiteracy in the Third World has no significant connection and inter-relationship with the First and Second Worlds. But unless we fully explain the relationship between literacy and development in the Third World, our studies will remain ahistorical, undialectical and incapable of explaining the phenomenon of illiteracy in the Third World, or its reemergence in the First and Second Worlds. It is because of the foregoing that I propose to give a brief over-view of the relationship between literacy and capitalist development in Europe.

Literacy and development: the European example

The massive development of the instruments of production, especially the steam engine, put large-scale production on the agenda. Quite rapidly the scattered, small production units (cottage industries) and the artisan gave way to concentrated, large production units and the manufacturer: the factory system. Concurrently agricultural scientific advances made large scale farming possible. The result was the well-known enclosure system which rendered hundreds of thousands of people landless and without a job in the rural areas. There was a combination of rural redundancy and the demand for labour by the new factories. A phenomenal growth of towns occured. The vast majority of people who had previously lived in scattered rural settlements now increasingly came to live in concentrated urban settlements. The majority of them who earlier had been serfs, peasants or artisans now became workers. The aristocracy who under feudalism had enjoyed undiluted supremacy gradually gave way to the bourgeoisie.

The above account is given to remind ourselves of the power and consequences of technological developments in man's history.

The historically momentous event of the industrial revolution put new pressures and demands on everybody. It opened up new avenues and challenges. The factory system, unfamiliar to a previously rural population, a more complex system of production than what was known under feudalism, imposed a new discipline, called for new skills, a new world outlook, and a generally more intelligent public. The new instruments of production now provided a new basis for society's subsistence and reproduction. There was no choice about it therefore; men had to mind machines. But in order to mind the machine it became necessary to count how many times the wheel turned, for example, or to know exactly how long the machine had been running so that at an exact moment in time the machine is fed with an exact amount of oil, raw materials, and etc. etc. The industrial revolution also entailed mass production. The amount of raw materials or articles being produced could not be committed to memory. The cost of production, distribution and sales figures had to be kept. And, dear to the heart of the bourgeoisie, profits and losses had to be calculated. To do all this was impossible without literacy.

It was in this general context that the people of Europe acquired education in general and literacy in particular. Clearly there was no way the people of Europe could run and manage an industrial economy without literacy. Literacy became a necessity. As the new productive forces expanded so as to involve the majority of the people, so the majority had to be literate; they had to acquire varying degrees of literacy.

On their part, the bourgeoisie, the rising rulers of the entire world, wanted, actually demanded, a generally literate and intelligent public from which to recruit workers. They also needed allies in their struggle against the aristocracy. The workers in particular, who constituted the majority, were opposed to the aristocracy. In this regard workers would, no doubt, be better allies if they could read, absorb and articulate the ideology of the new dominant class. What is more, for as long as the bourgeois method of production based on private ownership and private profit was the *de facto*, or developing towards becoming the *de facto* method of production, the articulation and absorption of the bourgois ideology to service the new order and the new production relations, became necessary. On their part, the workers needed literacy as a basis for acquiring and keeping a job or being promoted. Further, the period of the maturing of the bourgois revolution was also a time of nascent proletarian ideology. As the proletariat came to be aware of themselves as a class, albeit with varying levels of clarity, they demanded and organised education (and literacy) for themselves as an input in their organisation and struggle against the bourgeoisie

However, the critical condition which made the progressive provision and expansion of education possible was the development and application of productive forces, in particular machine power, and the corresponding surplus wealth produced and made available to society. This coincided with the growth of democratic organisations and movements. These organisations demanded education and exerted pressure for it to provide considerably more than the pure requirements of production. In addition to this, democratic organisations used part of their resources for the education of their members. Some of the surplus wealth was used to improve the general living conditions of the people. Gradually, shorter working hours, the development of machines to take over the more heavy manual jobs, better housing, domestic labour-saving technology, cheap eating places and take-aways etc., all combined over the years to give the people more time as well as provide an environment conducive to reading. At the same time the majority of the people were employed, large numbers of them in jobs which required the constant application of literacy skills. Also numerous institutions developed, the best examples of which are the bank and post office, whose services required literacy, and which only a few could avoid.

Another significant factor which conditioned and facilitated literacy in Europe was the struggle for and attainment of democratic rights and freedoms, especially the freedom of speech, association and assembly. Obviously, to supplant the aristocracy and establish itself the bourgeoisie needed these very rights and freedoms, although in the process they appropriated them. However, what concerns us here is the significance of the general democratic rights and freedoms for education in general, and literacy in particular. These created an environment which made it possible to apply cheap printing technology in developing a popular press as well as encouraging numerous publications for post literacy reading. In addition to this the improvement in communications and the integration of the European nations facilitated the flow and exchange of ideas. At the same time, the erosion of interpersonal communication* itself enhanced the print-media as a source of information and communication with the rest of the world.

Contrary to popular belief therefore, Europe did not industrialise **because** of widespread literacy; it was actually the other way round! Secondly, widespread literacy was not the result of a simple linear, causal relationship; it was a dialectical process, and also a historical necessity. Thirdly, the centre of the dialectics of literacy were the productive forces. Fourthly, widespread literacy followed in the footsteps of epoch-making class struggles in which one class was overthrown by another; a time of re-alignment of classes and social forces. Yet even when all is said and done it would appear that the peak of capitalism (1850 – 1860) was reached with a higher rate of illiteracy in the relevant countries than is imagined today. Widespread literacy for Europe is a truly post- rather than pre-industrial phenomenon. It means therefore that it is possible to industrialise without widespread literacy; it seems however that the management of the fruits of industrialisation clearly requires widespread literacy.

II.

Introduction

In the first section of this paper we analysed the technological developments which called for literacy as well as the economic, political and social forces which together dialectically facilitated and made widespread literacy in the capitalist countries a necessity. In this section the focus is on the Third World. Following on from our arguments in the first section it is assumed that for the Third World to achieve widespread literacy it too will have to undergo comparable technological changes. In analysing the eradication of illiteracy in the Third World therefore, we shall examine the state of technology and its application and the economy and politics in the region. However, the very mention of the Third World is itself an acknowledgement of imperialism. Imperialism provides the general environment in which the Third World operates, as well the general laws, forces and momentum which determine the direction and accomplishment of all major developments. The eradication of illiteracy being one of such events, it is bound to be determined accordingly. We will therefore begin this section with a brief analysis of why and how capitalism developed into imperialism.

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* The erosion of interpersonal communication first occurs at the assembly line and in the office where the worker, on the pain of disciplinary action, has to concentrate on his machine, minding a simple operation on the machine, with all his body and soul. The result is that the worker is »crippled by lifelong repetition of one and the same operation and thus reduced to a mere fragment of a man« . . . (Karl Marx). At the end of the day he is so tired, and in such disharmony with the general environment, that he neither has the energy, nor the mental vitality to engage in a sustained discussion.

Imperialism: a state of capitalism in crisis

The capitalist economy is based on private ownership of the means of production for private profit. On this basis, thousands of private enterprises grew up in each of the capitalist countries, to the extent that for every commodity numerous companies competed in its production. While prices varied, the force of the market forces made it difficult to sell well above the average price, and therefore make average profit. Under these circumstances advantage was with the enterprise able to sell at the cheapest rates, either due to access to cheap raw materials, a loan on favourable terms, cheap labour, better management, the application of better technology, or a combination of some or all of the above. In time the different companies undercut each other as it became increasingly difficult to make a profit under these conditions of free trade. Companies which could not produce cheap went bankrupt. Only the »fittest« enterprises survived; this was possible through cooperation and merger with sister companies, as well as with the banks which had survived similar competition. The result was the concentration and centralisation of capital to a level hitherto unknown, and the emergence of even bigger production units — the **monopolies**. The monopolies which arose were able to impose monopolistic prices, well above average prices under free competition, control technological innovation and development, and thus reap great profits. This development spelt the death of »free competition«, although it gave capitalism a new lease of life.

Between countries, free trade was equally doomed. The national bourgeoisie erected walls around their countries through various restrictions on exports and imports, so as to reserve the resources in their countries for the exclusive exploitation of the respective national bourgeoisie. But since capitalism had the entire world at its disposal, competition and rivalry among capitalist countries naturally extended to the rest of the world, which provided the raw materials and a market for the industrialised products. A key factor in this competition and rivalry was the massive expansion of the productive forces. Products of modern industry in Europe were not only consumed at home; they were also consumed in every quarter of the world. Similarly the required raw materials came from every corner of the globe. What is more, each of the capitalist countries increasingly came to acquire the capacity to supply the entire world with its needs of a variety of products. The needs of each country for raw materials and a market became correspondingly vast. Under the circumstances the capitalist countries were faced with three possibilities: cutthroat free competition, which would have ruined the capitalist system; various forms of cooperation, including the division of the world among themselves into spheres of exclusive exploitation; or war so that the victor would inherit the entire world.

As is well-known today, the resolution of the capitalist crisis was a combination of the three options above. The division of the world among the capitalist countries into spheres of exclusive exploitation came at a time of capitalist decadence, when capitalism had lost the revolutionary vigour of its youth. Empires were established and maintained on the basis of the massive denial and suppression of the democratic rights and freedoms which during its youth the bourgeoisie had championed, and the attainment of which had enabled the triumph of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Europe. The British bourgeoisie, for example, who earlier supported the birth of the Italian nation now presided over an empire »where the sun never set« — and wages never rose. Even the United States, itself the child of a struggle for self-determination and national independence, has had to commit some of the most barbaric crimes against humanity, as the only way to maintain her imperialist hegemony.

Imperialism and productive forces in the Third World

In 1848 an eye-witness of the revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisie, and in particular bourgeois technological accomplishments, observed with historical admiration:

> *The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground — what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?*[8]

It was under the sway of such massive and colossal productive forces (and more) that widespread literacy was achieved in Europe. For the Third World to eradicate illiteracy, she too must undergo a comparable massive development and application of the forces of production. However, under imperialism the bourgeoisie of a few pioneer capitalist countries took control and charge of Third World countries, and subjected them to their imperialist requirements.

As we have analysed above imperialism emerged out of capitalism in crisis. It was the crisis of an explosion of the forces of production, the continued application of which became incompatible with private profit. The objective of the bourgeoisie in the Third World, therefore, was not to unleash the productive forces on a massive and colossal scale, as had been the case in Europe earlier on, but to control and suppress technological advance, and selectively apply it, to the extent compatible with monopoly capital. This could only be so, since, for example, »existing British plants can already produce more rapidly than the products can be disposed of«[9] (for profits, of course). The limited technological application in the Third World therefore, called for a correspondingly limited level of literacy. Widespread illiteracy in fact has never been a real problem to imperialism. The British, for example, found Uganda to be the »pearl of Africa« in spite (or is it because?) of widespread illiteracy. The case of Uganda is instructive in this regard. Here the illiterate peasant farmer, using the hand hoe, yielded for imperialism more profit than the literate settler farmer with a tractor in neighbouring Kenya (D.W. Nabudere, 1980).[10]

Implications for literacy in the Third World

The limited and selective development and application of productive forces makes it impossible for the Third World to eradicate illiteracy during this epoch of imperialism. For the eradication of illiteracy can succeed only when rooted in production. However, to begin with, the restricted and selective application of technology makes literacy a necessity only for a minority of the total population in the Third World. Secondly, the restricted application of the productive forces curtails the amount of wealth generated in the Third

World. In this way the capacity of the Third World to pay the big bill of eradicating and keeping illiteracy at bay is severely reduced. Thirdly, of the limited wealth generated in the Third World, the larger portion of it is siphoned off to the First and Second Worlds, which further limits the Third World's capacity to pay for the cost of eradicating illiteracy. In a word therefore, under imperialism, the Third World has neither the capacity to pay nor the need for universal literacy.

Illiteracy in the capitalist countries

Today illiteracy is not confined to the Third World, it is truly an international phenomenon of all countries (with the possible exception of the Soviet Union), including the most advanced capitalist countries, the U.S.A., U.K., France and Germany.

It is unlikely that the advanced capitalist countries at any time totally eradicated illiteracy in the sense that there was not a single individual who could not read and write. But over the decades the number of illiterates in the capitalist countries seems to have grown and multiplied, to the point that illiterates became a discernable category. The capitalist countries found themselves discovering illiteracy in their midst.

If it is true that the eradication of illiteracy in Europe was rooted in production in the first instance, then its re-emergence must also be rooted in production. It is on the arena of production, the state of the productive forces in Europe, that I propose to focus.

Capitalism, during the stage of imperialism, did not only limit and restrict the development and application of the productive forces in the Third World, but did so in all the countries of the world. As a matter of fact, the curtailment of development and application of technology started in the capitalist countries themselves.

To begin with the bourgeois revolt against technology was obviously ad hoc, on a small scale and without theoretical articulation. But this changed with deepening crisis. Addressing himself to the great depression of the 1930's, Josep Caillaux, a leading financier-politician of French capitalism, declared:

> *It is necessary to take control of technique. It is necessary to prevent inventions suddenly upsetting production.*[11]

Monsieur Caillaux was not an armchair theoretician; he was practical. He was accordingly concrete on how technique could be controlled and inventions prevented. First, by setting up »in every State, Department of Technique, to discipline inventions, paying compensation for them, and not allowing them to come into use save in proportion as existing plant is amortised«; and secondly »to impose heavy taxes on all inventions of machinery«. Clearly a new Luddite, Monsieur Caillaux added, »Science must be hamstrung«.[12]

Since (and before) the Caillaux prescription, the bourgeoisie have not been content with the mere control of technique and prevention of invention. They have moved to stop the use of existing, backward techniques and machinery. Whenever this has not proved adequate, more desperate measures have been employed. These have included the destruction of existing stocks of commodities, like coffee, grain and beef; the destruction and/or dismantling of existing machinery; the ploughing up of crops and sown areas; and — what would make an English factory owner of 1870, who drove all to work, men, women and children, turn in his grave — holding the labour power of millions of willing and able-bodied workers unused.

Predictably, the destruction and crippling of the productive forces often takes the sharpest form and occasions some of the most far-reaching outcomes in the Third World. The example of Uganda under Idi Amin's dictatorship is instructive in this regard. At the height of his neo-colonial rampage, the only way thousands of families in the rural areas could procure salt and soap, for example, was to make these items themselves. To do this the peasants had to resurrect the backward, pre-capitalist techniques of production which had been interned by Her Majesty's salt and soap monopolies for about three generations. Once again, salt was made by filtering banana peelings or papyrus ash; and soap out of animal fat.

The expenditures account of the American **Agricultural Adjustment Administration** (AAA) published in the *Economist* of December, 1933 gives some idea of the seriousness of modern Ludditism, which is publically financed:

Expenditures under the A.A.A.

Allocation	*Approximate sum*
Cotton acreage ploughed up	110 million dollars
1934 cotton acreage reduction	150 million dollars
Emergency pig-sow slaughter	33 million dollars
Corn-hog production control	350 million dollars
Wheat acreage reduction	102 million dollars
Tobacco acreage reduction	21 million dollars

Today, the destruction of wealth and the productive forces on a massive scale has become a distinctive characteristic of capitalist policy. This massive economic sabotage has serious implications for literacy in the advanced capitalist countries. It reduces the total amount of wealth available to society, and in this way undermines the capacity to pay for various social services, including education. Secondly, the millions of unemployed are often cut off from the opportunity to practice their literacy skills, find it difficult to afford reading materials, so that gradually the law of use and disuse takes its toll. Massive economic sabotage also poisons the general economic atmosphere, but this will be amplified later.

Illiteracy world-wide

As argued above illiteracy in the Third World can only be eradicated through the massive development and application of the forces of production. However, under imperialism the bourgeoisie of a few countries control, oppress and hold back the development and application of the productive forces. Yet the oppression of one country by another is not limited to Third World countries. Within imperialist countries themselves some countries oppress others. The result is that the oppressed capitalist countries experience a heavier drag on their economy. This is what in part explains higher rates of illiteracy in the countries of Southern Europe like Portugal, Spain and Greece. But since the bourgeoisie are an international economic drag, even the most advanced capitalist countries cannot escape the phenomenon of illiteracy.

The growing crisis of imperialism, a crisis which centres around socialised production on the one hand and private appropriation on the other, has manifested itself in a number of ways relevant to illiteracy. On the economic front, within the imperialist countries, the crisis takes the form of general impoverishment, the best barometer of which is unemployment — itself now a permanent feature of the capitalist economy. In the educational sphere the order of the day are deep cutbacks in educational spending, the closure of educational institutions, the scrapping of educational projects, as part of a general package to dismantle the welfare state. In the Third World, where the crisis is at its sharpest, the general impoverishment is more dramatic. Here, for example, unemployment is so rampant that it is easier to keep the figures of the employed. And this is not all that is in store for the Third World.

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For instance, to facilitate the exploitation and oppression of the peoples of the Third World further the IMF has been particularly active in the recent decade, demanding and obtaining from these countries a package of »economic reforms«. These reforms have included concurrent massive devaluation, higher bank interest rates, wage freezes and reductions or complete removal of government expenditure on education, health and food subsidies. These »economic reforms« are in fact a two-pronged strategy of impoverishment. Devaluation, higher interest rates and wage freezes enable imperialism to realise hyper-profits in the application of capital in, as well as through, the procurement of raw materials and other products from, the Third World. At the same time cutbacks in government expenditure on social services is intended to »assist« the Third World pay foreign debts. The Third World is so deeply indebted that it is becoming increasingly ridiculous to talk of the principal amounts owed. According to Karin Lissakers, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, »interest payments on foreign debts now constitute the single biggest drag on many debtor nations' finances« *(Nairobi Times,* 7 January, 1983). The same paper reports that this year's interest payments on foreign debts equalled 45% of Brazil's export earnings, 44% of Argentina's and 40% of Chile's.

On the political front, there is within the bourgois circles the loss of faith in democracy. One example is that of millionaire Gordon Selfridge who »as an American spoke to fifty representative men in America, and did not find one who disagreed with his view that democracy in that great country could not possibly succeed as a system of government ... a country should be managed as a great business was managed«. Selfridge's was not idle talk. The reality of bourgeois government has been increasingly removed from parliament and concentrated in the executive, in the Cabinet; and from the Inner Cabinet into extra-parliamentary forms, until effective power and the decision of policy today lies with a small circle of leaders of finance capital. At the same time the routine of government has increasingly passed into the hands of a strengthened, centralised bureaucracy without public accountability. All this has deeply eroded democratic rights and freedoms. But if the democratic rights and freedoms still survive in the imperialist countries, in varying forms, these are normally totally absent in many countries of the Third World. In candid cases like that of Uganda and El Salvador, there is no longer room for pretence about democratic rights and freedoms. Here the governing clique and imperialism focus on the »improvement« of the »security situation«, so that the efficiency with which a regime is able to trample the democratic rights and freedoms of the people has become the very basis of its legitimacy. Anybody who resists or in any way opposes is an enemy of »national unity«, jeopardizes »economic recovery« (on the basis of the IMF package), and is also responsible for the regime's excesses.

The totality of the erosion of democratic rights and freedoms creates a general environment which is neither conducive to nor supportive of the generation and exchange of ideas and views, without which the eradication of illiteracy becomes impossible.

Towards the eradication of illiteracy

The struggle against illiteracy is actually a war against poverty, against the control of technique and the prevention of inventions. However, within countries it is the most exploited, the poorest, who are also illiterate. Between countries it is the oppressed countries, the most exploited ones, that also experience the highest levels of illiteracy. It is the bourgeoisie who gain most and therefore in general perpetrate backward technology on the basis of which a backward economic and social order is preserved to maximise private profit, together with the concurrent maximisation of public impoverishment. All this hampers social advancement on all fronts, including universal literacy. This the bourgeoisie achieves through a cobweb of alliances and links with the petty-bourgeois class of varying shades, within and between countries.

The way towards universal literacy, though not indialectically, is the unfetted development and concurrent full application of the productive forces in the First, Second and Third Worlds. This will mark the end of one epoch, the epoch of imperialism, and herald a new one, an epoch where production is integrated and planned to provide man's wants instead of private profit. The incentive to invention and improvement of technique will again become possible since such improvement will increase the general living standards and reduce labour. But before this can be realised, the bourgeoisie must be overthrown, and with it exploitation and oppression within and between countries. This will take the united front of all the oppressed peoples as well as the oppressed countries and nations of the world. To succeed that alliance requires the leadership of the most dispossessed, the proletariat and the peasants; but especially the proletariat. It is the proletariat who are the class of the future, while the peasants and the petty-bourgeoisie are classes in disintegration, a recruitment ground for the proletariat. The proletariat also have no illusions about private ownership of the means of production. Finally, as a class the proletariat gain greatest by demanding equality today and equality at heightening levels of production.

It is important to point out that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is not wishful thinking. To begin with, the bourgeois epoch, like that of the aristocracy before it, and, indeed, like anything in life, is subject to the law of change; it has a beginning, a period of existence and an end. The unfettered development and application of the forces of production as a result of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is not idle talk either. While in 1931, we were being authoritatively told that the »latest machine tools now being developed in America cannot be used economically in the United States«, we were also told with equal authority that only one outlet existed for such machine tools, the Soviet Union:

> *American machine tool makers, having a range of equipment sufficient to meet the needs of the American production plants, have supplied to Russia machine tools outside this range, specially designed to obtain still faster production. An excessive price has been demanded for these special lines on the ground that, while the machines show an improvement in output speed on their standard lines, they have no immediate prospects of finding other customers for them, there being no demand outside Russia for faster production than can be obtained with existing models.*[13]

The Soviet Union was able to absorb machine tools too advanced for the United States and Europe because she had entered a higher stage of economic and social develoment; the stage of socialist construction. The improvement of technique was no longer a »threat« to Soviet Russia but a boon since it meant the raising of the general standards of life. In the unfettered unleashing of the productive forces, employment for all, the revolutionary upsurge and organisation of the broad masses of the people — all under the leadership of the proletariat, the most advanced section of the oppressed people — must lie the explanation of the eradication of illiteracy in the Soviet Union, a banishment which seems to have withstood revisionism in that country. Indeed the Soviet campaign against illiteracy was the first national adult literacy campaign in human history. According to H.S. Bhola, the Soviet campaign against illiteracy (which stood at 70% and was projected to have required 150 – 300 years for Czarist Russia to eradicate), »remains even today a model for mobilisation and innovation«.

When the bourgeoisie is overthrown and the proletariat is in the saddle, the best of literacy methods and techniques which have been developed over the decades, and today applied only to small, pilot projects, will then be applied on a massive scale, so that literacy, today a declaratory human right, will become a living human right.

Notes

1. Literacy data: UNESCO, Office of Statistics. *Estimates and Projections of Illiteracy*, Paris, 1978.
2. H.S. Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy: A Critical Analysis of Some Selected Literacy Campaigns of the 20th Century* . . . , UNESCO, Paris, 1982, p. 42.
3. Robert Owen, *The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race*, 1849.
4. For an analytical division and differentiation of the modern world into Three Worlds, see what is popularly known as »Mao Tse Tung's Theory of Three Worlds«.
5. At a recent international meeting I attended, the Soviet delegate reported that the re-emergence of illiteracy in her country was not known.
6. Abdun Noor, »Managing Adult Literacy Training«, in *Prospects*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1982.
7. *Prospects*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1982, p. 164.
8. Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*.
9. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, Proletarian Publishers, Chicago, p. 21.
10. D.W. Nabudere, *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*, Zed Press, 1980.
11. Dépêche Economique et Financière (Spring 1932), quoted by Palme Dutt, p. 71.
12. Palme Dutt, p. 71.
13. Ibid., p. 22.

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[illegible] Apprenez! [illegible]
[illegible]

UERTE A LA IGNORANCI

Human progress depends on the
development of man's intellectual powers;
there is no other road to salvation. Teach!
Learn! Ignorance is the worst of prisons.

Los progresos del hombre dependen del
desarrollo del intelecto; no existe otro camino
para la salvación. ¡Enseñad! ¡Aprended!
¡La ignorancia es la peor de las cárceles!

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M. Isabel Infante R.

Seven hypotheses on adult literacy in Latin America

1. The main goal of literacy campaigns in Latin American societies must be the liberation of oppressed groups. Both the planning and the strategic and methodological implementation must be congruent with this aim.

In highly stratified societies such as those in Latin America, in which the majority of the population has little say within the social system and hardly any opportunity to participate in social advancement, literacy must — like any other educational measure intended for the people — be a means of liberation. In Persepolis in 1975 we declared that literacy must be »a contribution to the liberation and full development of mankind. Conceived thus, literacy creates conditions in which a critical awareness of the contradicitons in a society and its aims can be aquired. It stimulates initiative and participation in creating projects which can set things in motion and change the world, which can define the objectives of the true human development.« This declaration obviously follows the lines of P. Freire's education for liberation. Nevertheless, a wider definition of liberation has emerged in Latin America through the channels of Educacion Popular which emphasises the organization of a project by the people themselves. In contrast to the official suggestion which embodies the interests of the ruling classes, the project is rooted in the society concerned, in its culture, its vision of the world and finds its expression in the creation of new social relationships and of a more just social order.

Only by becoming a part of this process of liberation can literacy succeed in truly serving the underprivileged, without manipulating them by integrating them in a project foreign to their culture — as often happens in the numerous programmes for »functional« literacy programmes for »advancement« in an »integrational« approach, or in programmes based on permanent education. On the other hand, »neutral« or purely »technical« standpoints which avoid any kind of political commitment (because of a repressive political environment or for other reasons) can only lend support to the projects of the establishment.

The key to the process of liberation is conscientization, which enables the people — because they are aware of the contradictions in society — to organize themselves, change their environment and gradually become a political class, the supporters of an alternative project.

If the planning and the methods used are to be in accordance with these general aims, then the people must be involved from the start, alongside the experts, so that they can work together as equals, both educators and students, for the advancement of the process of liberation.

2. It must be taken into account that although the number of initial illiterates has diminished in Latin America (the only Third World continent in which it has), the number of secondary illiterates who have forgotten literacy skills and of functional illiterates continues to be high.

The reduction in the number of illiterates is due to a number of factors, among them increasing urbanization and the expansion of the educational system. Nevertheless, illiteracy by disuse is due to the low level of education and lack of practice in the literacy skills once aquired — in other words, to the need to work at an early age, to the inadequacy of the educational system in relation to people's needs and to the prevalence of manual labour, which requires only a minimum of reading and writing. On the other hand, technical and scientific progress (which also takes place in underdeveloped countries) is widening the gap between the educated sectors of society and the people, with their low level of education achievement. For the latter, the environment is constantly becoming more complex and less comprehensible. And those who cannot flourish within their own environment must be regarded as 'functionally' illiterate.

If the trend to modernization continues, »initial« or »absolute« illiteracy will probably cease to exist in Latin America around the turn of the century. On the other hand, illiteracy by disuse and, even more so, functional illiteracy, will remain and even increase if the structures of discrimination, which grant privileges to the few at the expense of the many, continue to exist.

Expensive literacy campaigns to help initial illiterates can only be justified if they are part of a much wider process of development. It was forgotten that literacy meant a whole new world of ideas and values; the new culture dominated and often even destroyed the old one. Ways of living which had survived for hundreds of years were wiped out, even though their values may have been in some ways superior to those which took their place. It will be a task for anthropologists to retrace the steps of half-vanished cultures.

On the other hand, illiteracy was seen as an obstacle to development in the sense of the developed countries, an obstacle which could be overcome, as a 'pest' which could be 'wiped out' in the cause of progress. Illiteracy was not seen as the product of unequal development, inherent to the very model of progress wich is being striven for.

Because of this, literacy campaigns proclaimed themselves to be aware of the fact that they can only be effective in such a context —

they serve other aims, such as cohesion among the people, and their full participation in the social process.

Literacy movements must be designed not just to develop literacy skills but to give the groups the skills they need to understand and change their environment. From here, the groups can design projects on a wider base, can consider various possibilities of further qualification within the general context of liberation for the people.

3. **It is not only necessary to discuss how literacy can be achieved, but also to discuss the necessity of learning to read and write, bearing in mind the cultural changes implied.**

For many years, the need for literacy has been unquestionable and unquestioned. Literacy was good, even for groups who existed far from civilisation and whose way of living had no place for written »benefactors« of the masses and notable contributions to the development of the country concerned. The people were thought of as the objects of literacy campaigns, or whatever the official term was, and not as people who had their own distinctive way of living and communicating. It was as though they had not existed; their contribution to society was not compatible with the pre-conceived structures determined by those groups who have always had the say in the history of each country.

However, anthropologists and sociologists have put their fingers on the wound of cultural extermination. A homogeneous society does not bring welfare and development. Groups who have become literate do not automatically benefit from social and economic progress. They may be culturally »integrated«, but they remain socially isolated. And in addition, they have lost most if not all of their thousand years of culture.

This is where the question arises: is literacy really necessary? When is it, when is it not suitable? There is obviously some sense in it for marginal urban groups (which are probably composed more of illiterates by disuse or functional illiterates, than of initial illiterates) and for rural groups who feel the need for this type of communication. However, why try to make isolated groups who do not feel the need for a written culture literate? Would it not be better to help them develop their own culture from within, if educational development is thought necessary? And if the necessity for written communication arises during the process, this would be quite different to enforced literacy.

Before starting a literacy programme, one should thus be quite certain that the group involved really feels the need to learn how to read and write.

4. It is important to look on written language as a specific form of communication. As such, it would be appropriate to make literacy part of a larger project on communication.

Written language can be defined as a special form of communication which is quite different from the spoken language in its system of en- and decodification, even though the written and spoken systems are closely related and though the spoken language must always be borne in mind when dealing with the written language.

In reality, the latter perpetuates the formal standard language of the middle classes and is a more clear and coherent means of expression which is necessary when there is no physical partner who can assist the understanding of the text. Someone who is writing, and who cannot keep adding information as is possible and usual in spoken language, is obliged to express him/herself more clearly and, in many cases, to make the text more redundant by including examples, repetitions, etc. If this does not happen, the text will seem aloof and be difficult for those unfamiliar with the topic to understand.

For this reason, written language demands more of the reader, who must intensify the skills of decodification and learn to use certain reading strategies more than others. Because the contents of the text are clearly structured, the reader is compelled to start thinking in unfamiliar patterns, but which must be adhered to in order to understand the text. The structure of a text may depend on structures of thinking taught in schools or on the characteristics of the elaborated code.

Illiterates, who have communicated in other ways and who usually express themselves in the restricted code are confronted, when they read, by a whole new cultural world which compels them to use skills which they have never learned to use in this way or in these situations. The influence of culture on cognitive style becomes obvious, and thus, for the illiterate, starting to read means a violent change in the way he or she uses cognitive skills in his or her culture.

The importance of these observations becomes apparent when considering the effect literacy programmes have had on illiterate groups, causing what can only be described as cultural invasion, which can even go as far as destroying cultural identity.

By linking literacy with communication, if reading is based on decoding the message, with receiving a signal, within a bilateral communication system, then writing is based on encoding, on the speaker. If, when reading, a person is confronted by cognitive structures different to his own, he can, when writing, express himself. However, if he is expected to write in the forms he has read, in the formal language of the middle classes using a logical structure, etc., he is again being pushed or integrated into a foreign culture. On the other hand, if, through writing, a group can express itself, can express its very own idiom, even if it does not correspond to formal language but belongs to the restricted code, we can succeed in helping their culture to develop from within.

Little by little, their way of expressing themselves and their way of describing reality will interact with the written language of other groups in society. For this reason it is important to emphasize the groups' creativity of expression, not only in their ability to compose structures which they have never heard, but also the semantic aspect. In this field we may find an opening which can be taken advantage of within a policy of cultural creativity.

Taking the group's forms of expression as the point of departure, their proverbs, sayings, songs, stories etc., it is possible to discover with them how they perceive reality and, in the course of discussion, to contribute to the development of their culture and of a critical awareness. Through this process the group can work at »re-creating« their culture, getting rid of elements of the dominant culture or of imported mythology, moulded in centuries of oppression. Simply »re-creating« present cultural forms will not, however, be enough. The task will also be to create new forms in order to be able to express a new way of seeing things. In this way, following Freire, »cultural synthesis« and not a cultural invasion will be the result of the educational process.

Thought of in this way, literacy takes on new dimensions. On the one hand it is linked with the language as a dynamic element whose finality as a representation of reality can open the doors to established culture, and whose basic function in the cultural environment offers important perspectives of development and creativity. On the other hand, as a form of communication, it contributes in its own way to the forming of relationships and social structures. It is important to emphasize that expression by means of language is just one form of communication among others. The limitations of the restricted code, at least where logically structured thinking is concerned, mean that other more symbolic forms of communication offer a greater variety of possibilities of expression, which could be developed simultaneously.

5. Literacy must take into account that language is alive and is not just the instrument or the object of teaching.

Although it cannot be denied that language can be learned as an instrument and as an object to be analysed and broken down into the smallest possible units, the complexity of language nevertheless suggests that it should be considered more comprehensively. We should try an interdisciplinary approach, but most of all, we should not neglect its connection with all that happens, with mankind's «here» and «now», which gives language its special dynamics and richness.

It is precisely this dimension of language which captures what Humboldt called «energy», the constant stream of language made by man in his search for meaning. Language has a meaning in a concrete situation, and in this situation it can be understood and interpreted. This is why a programme concerned with language must try to relate as closely as possible with the situation and thus with the language used, and not work with stereotyped texts in a standard form of the language which have nothing to do with the people concerned.

The analysis of some formal aspects of the language may be useful when solving, for example, certain concrete problems of communication. When working in depth, other aspects will be more important than formal matters, especially meaning, as understood in the sociocultural context.

6. Literacy must generally consider all elements which play a role in the generation of language: sociolinguistic pro-

cesses, language as a system of symbols, and the use of language in time and space, in other words, its socio-cultural conditioning.

In reading and writing, psychological, sociological and linguistic factors are in constant interaction. Where reading is concerned this interaction can be described diagramatically as follows: visual perception of the symbols provokes cognitive strategies designed to find their meaning, through the identification of ideomatic sequences, within the structure of a given language which has been internalized and in accordance with sociolinguistic and social experience in general.

What is being read arouses the reader's interest and compels him to carry on and to use more intensively the strategies he needs in order to understand. In this way, psychological factors such as cognitive strategies and affective elements (motivation) work together with linguistic elements (the idiomatic sequences of a given language) and sociolingual elements (sociolingual experience, such as language codes, and social experience in general).

Where writing is concerned, psychomotoric elements must be included as well.

7. **When developing texts for use in literacy programmes we should remember that the language used must be accessible (the same code as the target group) and must reflect the group's way of thinking and situational context through which the topic — which depends on the group — will be rooted in its »circumstances«. Not to forget motivation, which stems from the »meaning« the text has for the group or, finally, formal aspects such as linguistic repertoire and the types of structure used.**

In some programmes based on Freire's approach texts have been used which were based on recordings of conversations with illiterates. Undoubtedly both the language and the way a topic is developed in this way are very accessible to groups who have no stereotyped texts, even though the final form may have taken aspects of information theory into account, or follow »universal« rules of cognitive structure.

If the aims described above are to be reached, the best thing is to allow the illiterates themselves to participate in developing the texts, either by tape-recording, as in the example mentioned above, or by writing short texts when learning to write. It is important that the texts should not just be »felt« to be the group's own, but that they should really be the group's texts. They become a means of expression, a means of telling other people where the group stands in relation to others. If in addition the texts produced by neoliterates also reflect the needs of the community, the positive reaction will act as a reinforcement for the group.

If for any reason outside experts have to develop the texts, they must take great care to identify the basic topics which are important to the group, their vocabulary, their way of thinking and the situation and context. They should also be careful to use the structures used by the adults and to avoid childish oversimplification, which would not motivate the groups to go on.

Whatever happens, the most important thing is to respect the culture of the illiterates and be aware that they are the most important change agents in their own development.

Conclusion

As we have seen, becoming literate is a highly complex process which must be approached from many different angles if it is to be as successful as possible. To disregard any of the many factors involved would mean losing a powerful element of enrichment within the whole, and, indeed, running the risk of uprooting the problem from its context and thus depriving it partly or wholly of meaning.

If, on the other hand, all the aspects are given due consideration (at a depth which this article obviously cannot reproduce), then the process of becoming literate can achieve the function of a catalyst in the cultural creativity and the liberation of illiterate groups, taking their vision of the world as the point of departure and helping them to formulate their own ideas of society.

We herewith invite our readers to become **authors of our journal**. Possible themes of the next issues are:

- Culture and communication
- international cooperation, partnership and professionalism
- evaluation and research
- orality, literacy, print and electronic media
- technology: innovations, transfer and alternatives
- global and local concerns: environment and peace
- teaching, training and learning

We are interested in looking at these themes by way of case studies, reports, statements, stories and poems reflecting theoretical and/or practical implications for us as adult educators. We would appreaciate it if graphic material, photos etc. could be added.

Please contact the editor.

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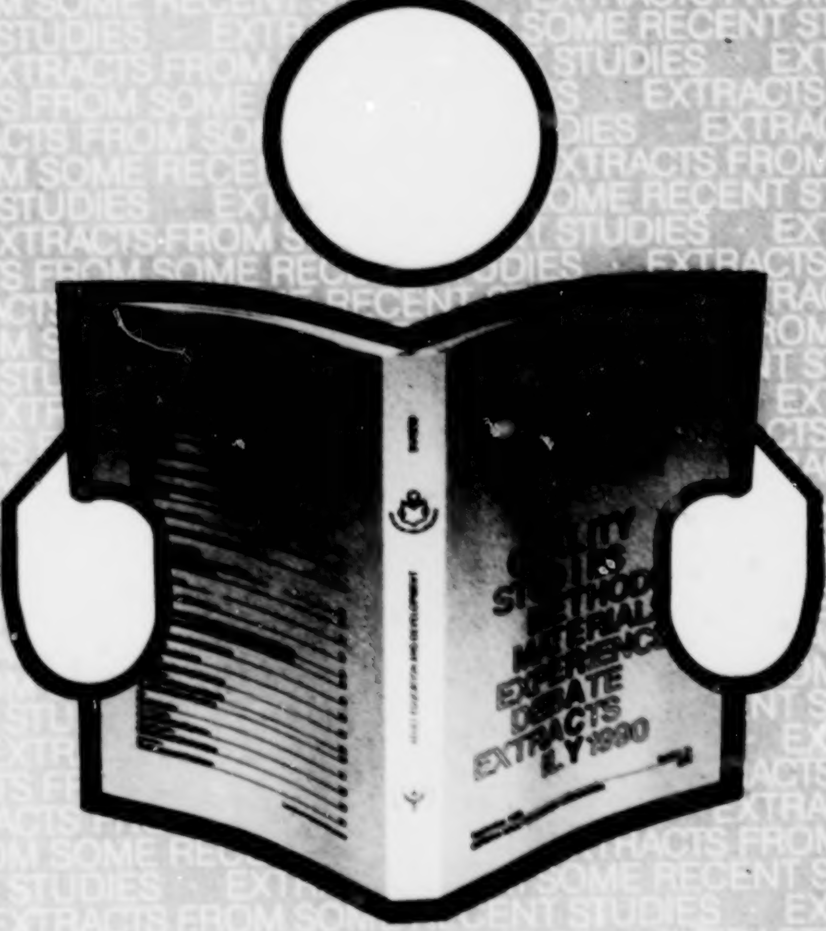
MATERIAL
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EXTRACTS FROM SOME RECENT STUDIES

In recent years a considerable amount of good materials has been published related to the issue of literacy. Some of it continues with the research trying to clarify the context and process of literacy, some looks at policies and strategies of literacy programmes and activities, while some is concerned with methods and materials. Additionally there is the material which looks into adult education or aid to education and development and therefore has to look at adult literacy.

As we are aware that most of our readers do not have access to the majority of these publications we have taken short but important extracts to present them here. However, it could be seen as an invitation to those who have the chance to obtain the materials to delve deeper into them.

We wrote to either the publisher or author and asked for their permission in reprinting these extracts. We would like to thank all of them for their support in spreading information on important issues.

The World Crisis in Education.
The View from the Eighties
by Philip H. Coombs
New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1985, pp. 278/279

Unrealistic Targets

Although the growing acceptance and application of the foregoing principles and innovative approaches to literacy are certainly encouraging, a more disconcerting side of the story is that, in apparent disregard of the clear lesson taught by the EWLP and by many other literacy undertakings that ended in disappointment, little seems to have changed at the level of international rhetoric. When ministers of education gather at UNESCO conferences, the old rhetorical drums continue to beat out the familiar call for the total eradication of illiteracy from the face of the earth (these days by the year 2000) with no reference to how it can be done. To cite one recent example, a UNESCO-sponsored conference of Latin American and Caribbean ministers of education convened in Quito, Ecuador, in 1981 to formulate goals and plans for a new regional "major project," set as one of the priority objectives "the eradication of [adult] literacy by the end of the century." A companion goal was to provide "all children of Latin America and the Caribbean [with] a minimum of eight to ten years of general education" by 2000. These goals and deadlines, it should be noted, were formulated not by UNESCO but by the ministers themselves, speaking for their respective countries. No one can doubt that they are laudable goals, but that is not the issue. The real issue is whether they are realistically attainable goals within the specified time-frame.

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By now it is much clearer than it was in the 1950s and early 1960s, when virtually anything seemed possible within a decade or two, that spreading adult literacy and good-quality primary schooling throughout the developing world is, by its very nature, a far more complicated, difficult, and expensive undertaking than it was first thought to be. Yet inflated rhetorical resolutions and targets, known to be unrealistic, continue to be adopted and promoted, not only in education but in other areas of major human need. Similar unrealistic international slogans are currently being promoted by other United Nations specialized agencies, trumpeting, for example, "health for all by 2000" and "food for all by 2000."

One wonders what good purpose can possibly be served by such admittedly unattainable targets. The justification sometimes given in private conversations is that they serve to spur individual countries to move faster than they otherwise might toward these goals and to stimulate greater external assistance to help countries on their way. There was undoubtedly a measure of truth in this thesis in earlier times when the international development movement was just getting started and there was much still to be learned about the realities of implementation. But this argument has worn thin by now, when even the poorest peasants in rural isolation have had their fill of inflated and unfilled promises. Unattainable targets and implied promises repeatedly issued under the imprimatur of prestigious international or national agencies can only spread a contagion of disillusionment and cynicism on all sides—and especially among the people in greatest need of help. For the habit of broadcasting rhetorical dreams works in its own way to divert energies from what actually needs to be done, namely, to formulate concrete plans based in hard realities, to recognize the obstacles to their attainment, to assess the means available for overcoming the obstacles, and then to proceed to do what can actually be done within the confines of real possibilities. We are convinced that if international conferences addressed these down-to-earth tasks, rather than indulging in rhetorical flourishes, the participants would return home much better informed and with a greater resolve to get on with the job of doing what can, in fact, be done.

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Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.
Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion
by The World Bank
Washington: The World Bank, 1988, pp. 29 - 31

Adult Literacy and Training

Falling enrollment ratios must result eventually in adult populations less "schooled" and, as a consequence, less productive than those living and working in Africa today. Even before the current fiscal problems, in the early 1970s, widespread concern about education budgets and patterns of inequality in the formal education system led to an appeal for nonformal education for adult literacy and other purposes. Although data are not available on these programs and the extent to which they have grown or contracted, adult programs are important in several countries.

By the late 1970s adult education and training activities included, in most African countries, not only literacy teaching but also some or all of the following: out-of-school training for the informal sector; skill acquisition and income generation for women; the training of trainers for health, nutrition, and agriculture; and a variety of activities designed to provide education equivalent to the several levels of the formal system. Nonformal education in Africa is characterized by the following: It serves mainly young adults, many of whom are the same age as their counterparts in the formal schools; much of the activity is organized locally and takes place with little or no direct subvention and control from the state beyond some minimal registration and supervision; the young recipients (or their families) often pay for courses that are, in some sense, equivalent to those offered in the schools or in formal industrial training;

even those who pay for instruction are typically drawn from the poorer elements of rural and urban society, and they are often obliged to combine their education or training with work; many of the courses taught, especially those organized through nongovernmental organizations, have been negotiated with the participants or their representatives and, to this extent, reflect the needs of the community.

Many of these characteristics are innovative and likely to induce efficiency. Some are typically absent from—and could, with appropriate modification, be emulated in—the formal education system. The possibilities for change with respect to all elements of the education system will be discussed in part II of this book.

The presence and recent growth of nonformal education programs raise three questions for African governments. First, do the present equivalency programs that offer education and skills outside the formal sector point to ways that would dramatically open up to a wider public many of the currently underutilized institutions of the ministries of education and labor? Second, can the concerns of African governments about the vocational preparation of young people for informal sector employment be met through existing low-cost, out-of-school programs rather than new national schemes for vocational study within schools? And third, to what extent, if any, can the existing nonformal education structures compensate for slowdowns in expansion of school enrollments? These questions are addressed in the chapters that follow. The question of complementarities between the formal and nonformal education systems, however, deserves some brief comment here.

Unlike primary, general secondary, vocational, and university education, adult literacy education is

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not a regular concern of the ministry of education in most African countries. Usually, it commands attention on an ad hoc basis for a particular campaign or series of campaigns. The tendency has been for the national literacy coordinating committee to use mechanisms that have routinely been associated with other forms of adult and nonformal education—token honoraria for teachers, classes scheduled during students' time off from jobs, school buildings commandeered for evening use. Part and parcel of most successful adult literacy campaigns has been a powerful sense of the commitment of unpaid or modestly paid volunteers. Such relatively low-cost means are much in evidence in the first months or years of the campaign, but in the medium to long term, reliance on volunteers and a campaign spirit probably cannot be sustained. The institutionalization of these efforts continues to be a challenge.

Moreover, the accomplishments of the successful campaigns in, say, Ethiopia and Tanzania, could rapidly become diluted if primary school systems cannot attract and serve the ever larger cohorts of children during the 1980s and 1990s. In countries where the primary system fails to meet this challenge, the call for universal literacy, if issued at all, can never be met in a single campaign. In such an environment the campaign would have to be a perennial event, continued with additional expense and effort until such time as the birth rate stabilizes. Unless the problem of low school enrollment ratios is vigorously attacked, the pool of young adult illiterates will be refilled as rapidly as campaigns to eradicate illiteracy can deplete it.

Adult and child literacy (and illiteracy) are thus intimately connected. Adult literacy campaigns have advanced the cause of universal education in several countries, and more general programs of adult or community education are vital to the maintenance of new schooling traditions in parts of Africa. Campaigns to achieve adult literacy or universal primary enrollment will prove to be poor investments, however, unless they are consolidated by productive opportunities to put new skills to use. Lifelong education opportunities are essential to give individuals the information and skills they need to adapt to changing economic circumstances.

Theory and Practice of Literacy Work.
Policies, Strategies and Examples
by Ali Hamadache
in cooperation with Daniel Martin
Paris. UNESCO and Ottawa. CODE. 1986, p. 10

The present document attempts to form a synthesis of the many and varied activities undertaken by Member States and draws on a number of publications relating to literacy work, more especially those issued by Unesco.

It is primarily intended for the designers, planners and administrative staff concerned with the promotion and implementation of literacy programmes and to all those authorities and specialists actively engaged in the educational process. Although the different aspects dealt with have not been exhaustively discussed, those readers will find subjects for reflection and a stimulus to action together with practical information which will help them in carrying out their work.

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Literacy: Reading the Word and the World
by Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo
London Routledge and Kegan Paul 1987 pp 56/57

You, Donaldo, told me that you are often shocked to learn that some African peoples, for example, who fought brilliantly to reappropriate their culture and throw out the colonizers, are later depreciated by the new leadership because they cannot read the word. Any people who can courageously break the chains of colonialism can also easily read the word, provided the word belongs to them. Their new leadership fails to recognize that in the struggle for liberation these people were involved in an authentic literacy process by which they learned to read their history, and that they also wrote during their struggle for liberation. This is a fundamental way to write history without writing words. It is shocking that even though they were successful in the most difficult aspect of literacy, to read and write their world, they were belittled in this much easier aspect, that which involved reading and writing the word. Your question highlights the profoundly political aspect of literacy, making me see that what you refer to as "the language of possibility" has to be based on respect for existing possibilities.

Another point that arises from your question is that of the rights of multiple voices. Taking Latin America as an example, let's think about the so-called indigenous populations. These populations were in place before the white population arrived. Thus, the white population became involved with an established civilization that also had its own voice or voices. These popu-

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lations have the right to the voices that were silenced by the Hispanic-Portuguese invasion. Any literacy project for these populations necessarily would have to go through the reading of the word in their native languages. This literacy cannot require that the reading of the word be done in the colonizer's language.

If we foresee a possible revolution in these societies, we have to develop space for the literacy of possibility to take place. I remember vividly a conversation I had with Fernando Cardenal and Ernesto Cardenal in Nicaragua in which they both expressed sentiments similar to those we are now discussing. They spoke extensively about the Mosquito Indians. They both felt that in any literacy campaign, Mosquito culture had to be respected totally. Also, they felt that the Mosquitos' language would have to be a fundamental element in the literacy process. A literacy program that negates the plurality of voice and discourse is authoritarian, antidemocratic.

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Literacy
Writing, Reading and Social Organisation
by John Oxenham
London Boston and Henley Routledge and Kegal Paul 1980 pp 133/134

The drift of the examination so far has been that literacy may become irrelevant to large areas of everyday communication, commerce, politics, administration, domestic life and leisure, but that it will probably remain necessary to the development of human thought, scholarship, science and technology and to the provision of literature for leisure. If we suppose that this prognosis has some plausibility, what might it signify for the universal right to literacy and for compulsorily teaching all children the three Rs?

If the areas of frequent and necessary application of literacy shrank considerably, the skills could cease to be needed for access to information, for safeguarding rights, for informed participation in social life and culture or for earning a decent living. The basis for declaring it a human right would fall away. Simultaneously, the very fact that it was no longer a widely useful skill would cause large numbers of those who had learned it, like the young Burmese noblemen, to let it lapse into disuse. Literacy might well become the art of a devoted minority.

In such case, the issue would be debated whether reading and writing should be taught at schools from the very earliest years as the very core of the curriculum, as is the case at present, or whether it should be treated as an option, to be taken up by people, as and when they find it appropriate. On the one hand, it is known that the ability of children to learn reading and writing is conditioned by their maturation, that at least four years of good tuition and practice are generally required to assure at least permanent literacy and that adults attain proficiency much more rapidly than children. These grounds might counsel dropping literacy from the curriculum of the primary school. It might be more efficient to introduce it to fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds who showed some likelihood of joining the 'devoted minority' and to keep open the option for later acquisition to those who later in life developed an interest which needed literacy. The under-fourteens could be turned to other learning, to social and 'survival' skills.

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On the other hand, there might be hesitations about losing the possible desirable side-effects of an early training in literacy. There is no doubt that learning to read and write does help discipline the memory, promotes fine co-ordination between language, eye and fingers, and demands the methodical application of principles and rules. It might thereby help lay the foundations of good learning in the variety of other subjects and skills pursued in schooling. The loss of its contribution might create unforeseen difficulties to learning in other areas.

Voicing such uncertainties could be dismissed as the sort of superstitious conservatism that has kept Latin so long as a criterion for entering certain universities. An argument can be made that any form of structured, systematic and guided learning will have the same effects as training in literacy. Yet combining so many faculties as need to be marshalled to get something written, may have psychological benefits which cannot be replicated by simpler forms of learning. The debate cannot of course be settled here: as we have repeated often, the state of knowledge and research on the ramifications of the exercise of literacy is still far from complete.

Nevertheless, speculation like this suggests questions which, if researched and elucidated now, might illuminate decisions which may one day need to be taken. Literacy remains essential to the conduct of and participation in the life of today's industrialising, urbanising, modernising, nation-states. It remains the almost unquestioned basis of almost any activity dignified by the label 'education'. But since large pools of illiteracy persist alongside, opportunities exist patiently to explore the effects of literacy on the process of human learning and reasoning and to determine whether or not they might be dispensable in a society, which put little reliance on visual recording and communication.

If literacy were indeed to prove dispensable, an interesting reversal would occur. Once, the skills of reading and writing were the prerogative of the few. These privileged ones had knowledge, authority, power, access even to the godhead and the riddles of the universe. Literacy was denied to the masses, indeed held in awe by them. The redundancy of literacy would make it again the province of the few. But these few would busy themselves with something which the masses had actually cast off.

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Adult Literacy.
Lessons and Promises. Mozambican Literacy Campaigns 1978 – 1982
by Agneta Lind
Doctoral Dissertation, published in Studies in Comparative and International Education
(Stockholm, Sweden), no. 12

ABSTRACT

This study analyses and compares the four national adult literacy campaigns carried out in Mozambique between 1978 and 1982. Participation increased during the first two campaigns to over half a million but, from 1981, decreased considerably. The study aims to explain this process of rise and fall. The literacy policies of the ruling Frelimo Party and the government are examined, as well as the organizational and pedagogical implementation of the campaigns.

Mainly qualitative methods, such as participant observation, were employed. The macro-level implementation analysis is supplemented by micro-level case study observations on teaching-learning in specific literacy classes. A conflict perspective on education in society guides the analysis of the findings.

The findings indicate that political priority and national commitment to adult literacy were crucial for the mobilization and participation achieved in the first two campaigns, which stressed the state's ideological objectives. Teaching quality was less important than the concern shown by the state at all levels. Also, these first campaigns catered mainly to strongly motivated people and semi-literates with some mastery of the teaching language, Portuguese.

When more illiterate people enrolled in the later campaigns, organizational and pedagogical shortcomings were revealed. The campaign management had become more bureaucratized and mobilizing activities decreased. At the same time, more priority was given to "academic" and skill-oriented objectives, which corresponded with a general trend towards more hierarchical and formal approaches to education and management. This trend is explained as a response to the drive to increase production and as a reflection of class interests within the state bureaucracy. Worsening economic problems and war had an increasingly direct negative effect upon the campaigns. The study nonetheless concludes that, given the scarce resources and multiple problems, the Mozambican literacy campaigns were noteworthy accomplishments.

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The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment
published by the UNESCO Press and UNDP
Paris: UNESCO/UNDP 1976, pp. 12/13

This report approaches EWLP in two ways. First, it analyses EWLP vertically, with a series of project profiles. That is, each project is described and analysed so as to elicit particularly salient information in the following areas, as appropriate: time perspective, policy and objectives, participants, administration and organization, teachers and other personnel, curriculum and methods, teaching materials, costs, and evaluation and research. Each profile ends with a summary which attempts to single out some of the major lessons learned from that project.

Secondly, all projects are analysed—and lessons drawn from them—horizontally. That is, global lessons are sought under the following four headings: Why EWLP?, The wherewithal, Doing the job, The results. Particularly in these chapters a certain paradox appears. On the one hand, problems encountered by EWLP resulted from its innovative aims and character. But on the other, at least some of its limits were imposed by the fact that its implementation depended on traditional forms of technical assistance. From this contradiction emerged, happily, not only problems but also numerous positive guidelines for the future.

Thus no claim is made for quantitatively airtight argumentation. The report does not hold up a single 'model' of literacy action for replication or even adaptation. Nor does it defend any single approach to literacy. Rather, it strives to offer information and ideas that could be of use nationally and internationally, in projects ranging from micro-experiments to mass campaigns. In this pluralistic and self-critical spirit, the report asks more questions than it even begins to answer.

The point, then, is to encourage rather than avoid debate, to stoke up rather than damp down even unorthodox thinking about the various subjects covered here. It has been felt that this would be the most useful—and perhaps most readable—manner in which to make known the issues raised by EWLP. If these issues have a rather uneven quality about them, this is because the programme's implementors were understandably more concerned with doing than with recording. As a result, *post facto* information available was of varying reliability. This made an essentially qualitative approach the only—if not necessarily the best—way to interpret the results.

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Literacy & Orality.
Studies in the Technology of Communication
by Ruth Finnegan
Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1988 pp. 175, 179/180

It may now be clear why I was hesitant to start out in chapter 1 with a crisp definition of 'orality' or 'literacy'. For the main burden of the discussion in this volume has been that 'orality' and 'literacy' are not two separate and independent things; nor (to put it more concretely) are oral and written modes two mutually exclusive and opposed processes for representing and communicating information. On the contrary they take diverse forms in differing cultures and periods, are used differently in different social contexts and, insofar as they can be distinguished at all as separate modes rather than a continuum, they mutually interact and affect each other, and the relations between them are problematic rather than self-evident.

The implication of this is that looking for clear-cut 'consequences' or 'impacts' from these traditional technologies is not likely to be very productive. Given that oral and written forms are diverse in their development and usage, so too will be their consequences – something it is also worth bearing in mind when assessing the often naive prognostications about the (apparently) automatic results expected from the new 'information technology revolution'.

One of the main themes then has been to query the simple model of the nature of, and relations between, 'orality' and 'literacy' which sees them as clear-cut and opposing technologies, leading to a series of inevitable or (at least) highly probable social and cognitive consequences, and perhaps even to different and revolutionary historic stages in human development or human thought and consciousness. Such views are still often stated as the conventional wisdom, but, it should now be obvious, are highly controversial. They are vulnerable from two directions, both touched on in this volume. First, many would now, like myself, challenge their theoretical assumptions: i.e. the implicit technological determinism that underlies them. And secondly, the accumulating empirical evidence from many different areas (only a selection of it presented here) increasingly throws doubt on many of the once taken-for-granted assumptions about unitary consequences from orality or literacy. . . .

Maybe here we have after all come on one important consequence of modern forms of information technology: not that they *in themselves* do anything, far less bring about the kind of automatic social impacts envisaged by many of their advocates, but that they provide an opportunity and a challenge for us to re-assess our own consciousness of the problematics of human communication and information representation. 'Oral' and 'written' media have perhaps held the centre of the stage too long. This is not just because (as described here) their 'impacts' as technologies have been exaggerated or misunderstood, but because they have also given us too narrow a vision of what is involved in human experience and communication. Alphabetic writing has perhaps indeed had profound effects on our consciousness and organization in the west over the last few centuries, not because writing in itself brings effects but because of the way we have chosen to use and regard it, sanctioned by a whole series of educational, economic and political institutions. 'Modern IT', through its potential for new ways of representing musical, graphic, mathematical and visual information, among them moving pictures and auditory forms, can perhaps be used as the occasion for re-awakening us to the manifold forms of human expression and understanding through the world and through the ages which we may have omitted in our own culture to make as much of as we might, owing to our narrow focus on alphabetic literacy and a view of speech modelled on this. If so, and if we can take the opportunity to re-notice some relatively submerged but still existent forms of human experience, then this reaction to modern information technology could indeed have important consequences for the human spirit.

The final conclusion, then, must be a positive not a negative one. That is, that just as speech, writing and print have not determined human existence but have been formed and exploited by human beings so as to provide opportunities for development in particular directions, so too with the opportunities offered by modern communication technologies. As ever, the choices are not purely technical ones, but social, artistic, intellectual and ethical.

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Adult Literacy and the Mode of Production
by Frank Youngman
in International Journal of Lifelong Education, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 149 – 161 (here: p. 160)

Conclusion

In my opinion a lot of the writing on literacy exhibits considerable confusion about its socio-economic context. Dichotomies such as pre-industrial/industrial or traditional/modern are unhelpful categorisations. Indeed, so is the usage of the concept of the Third World if it fails to differentiate social formations as dissimilar as Vietnam and India, Mozambique and Kenya, Nicaragua and Brazil (all of which are of great interest in terms of their recent adult literacy programmes). This confusion stems from the theoretical inability to distinguish clearly between capitalism and socialism, and between them and the social formations which preceded them. Failure to do this leads to very unsatisfactory explanations of the factors in the achievement of literacy. For example, a recent international review of literacy research cites 'national will' (IDRC/ICAE, 1979: 12) as an important factor but it fails to specify what the concept means or to clarify its material basis in different societies such as early twentieth century Japan or contemporary Vietnam. Such explanations remain superficial because they are not derived from a theoretical framework which provides a coherent approach to the differentiation of societies and to the conceptualization of the relationship of literacy and society.

Similarly Bhola in his recent book on adult literacy campaigns, *Campaigning for Literacy* (Bhola, 1981), tends to focus on political, ideological and technical issues and give an inadequate account of the underlying economic structures of the societies he is discussing. The book contains eight case studies from different countries but does not satisfactorily identify the nature of their different social formations. Thus in his study of the Brazilian Literacy Movement, which is his only example of a campaign from a non-socialist country, he fails to characterise Brazil as a specifically capitalist social formation. His advocacy of mass campaigns as a solution to the problem of literacy is therefore seriously weakened by his failure to theorise the socio-economic contexts of literacy.

This article has been deliberately theoretical. Its brevity and its intention of challenging prevailing idealist and technicist interpretations of literacy mean that it has presented a rather schematic argument on the basis of what is in fact a much more complex and subtle body of theory. However, I have tried to put forward a hypothesis for research which, by application to concrete situations and by further theoretical refinement, might improve our understanding of how to achieve a fully literate world.

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The Interface Between the Written and the Oral

by Jack Goody

Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney
Cambridge University Press 1987, pp IX/X

This book deals with three aspects of the interface between the oral and the written which are often confused. There is the meeting of cultures with and without writing, historically and geographically. There is the interface of written and oral traditions in societies that employ writing to varying degrees in various contexts. And there is the interface between the use of writing and speech in the linguistic life of any individual. Chapter 11 takes up these problems specifically for language but the interest runs throughout the book.

The impact of the written channel upon cultural systems was never of course everywhere the same. It depended upon social circumstances and varied with the type of system employed for the visual representation of language. Such systems developed out of other forms of visual representation or graphic device – to put the notion yet more generally. They can be ordered morphologically and to some extent historically in a developmental sequence with a reasonable measure of precision.

There are many ambiguities in the use of the word literacy. In talking about its consequences, Watt and I (1963) referred to the presence of a system of writing, that is, not just to the written word as such but to the teaching of a system of writing; others use the term to indicate a specific level of accomplishment. Clearly there are a number of possible variations in the impact on culture, depending upon:

1 the nature of the script and its method of reproduction,
2 the numbers able to read and write at a specific level (for example, a signature),
3 whether individuals are learning to read and write their natural tongue, a related language, a different living language, a dead language or an invented language,
4 the width of use within the culture (e.g. whether or not that is restricted to religion),
5 the content of the written tradition.

Again, the question of literate (or non-literate) societies is different from that of literate (or illiterate) individuals; in the first case the term refers to the presence or absence of a written tradition, in the second to the ability to read or write to a particular level. It is in order to avoid some of these ambiguities that I have tended to talk about societies with and without writing when dealing with the first kind of interface, or with general comparisons

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Indigenous Agricultural Revolution.
Ecology and Food Production in West Africa
by Paul Richards
London, Melbourne, Sidney, Auckland, Johannesburg, Hutchinson 1985, pp. 155/156

The idea that West African countries might pursue an agricultural revolution largely through mobilization of indigenous skills and resources has profound implications for the training of agricultural professionals. Under the concept of 'people's science' the 'agricultural expert' is replaced by the notion of an agent who is a catalyst and facilitator. Inculcating the right kind of skills and sensitivities requires a new approach to training. The following brief discussion of some of these issues makes an appropriate conclusion to the present chapter. Further suggestions for a practical 'point of entry' into the world of 'people's science' are discussed in an Appendix.

Goody (1977) has written at length about the way in which literacy transforms traditional society, laying special stress on the significance of lists, recipes and formulae, and on the emergence of the scribe and scholar as representatives of a new 'professional' class. One of his chapters is entitled 'the recipe, the formula and the experiment'. This appears to carry the implication that scientific experiments should be viewed as an extension of the healer's recipe or apothecary's formula (although, in the event, the chapter has little to say about experiments as such). Goody may be right to suggest that formulaic experiments are directly dependent on literacy. It is far from certain, however, that literacy is a similar pre-condition for the emergence of an experimental approach to agriculture. Field trials (of the kind carried out by Mende farmers) make their point on the ground, not on paper. Arthur Young, describing an eighteenth-century experiment in irrigation, put his

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finger on the matter at issue when noting that Mr Bakewell's 'proof pieces' brought 'complete conviction to the mind of every person who *views* them' (Mingay, 1975: 79, my emphasis).

Why then do Goody and others interested in cross-cultural studies of 'rationality' (cf. Hollis & Lukes, 1982; Horton, 1967; Wilson, 1970) pay no attention to the issue of indigenous agricultural experimentation when debating the differences and similarities between 'traditional' and 'modern' systems of thought? Perhaps the answer is to be found in what Coomaraswamy (1979) has called 'the bugbear of literacy', by which he means a consistent downgrading of oral and practical skills – as if these were in some way sub-intellectual – by those who make their own living from 'scholarship'. Formal-sector scientists are biased towards 'formulaic' approaches (so the argument would run) by virtue of their own dependence on literacy. It is not hard to locate examples of research initiatives undertaken more in response to debates in the literature than to the practical problems of farming in communities adjacent to the research station. The opposite side of this coin is the evident surprise of many agricultural researchers at the idea that small-holder farmers in Africa are active experimenters. 'This cannot be so' (I have sometimes been told) 'because the men and women concerned are illiterate'.

It can be argued that the roots of this misconception are to be found in the 'bookishness' of much agricultural education. Examinations tend to test mastery of 'formulaic' skills rather than inventiveness and problem-solving abilities. Even practical projects will tend to be assessed according to formal 'rules' of experimentation, rather than according to the test of whether the results achieved did anyone any good. This is an aspect of a very broad problem in science, which Maxwell (1984) characterizes as the pursuit of 'knowledge' rather than the pursuit of 'wisdom' (to Maxwell the defining characteristic of a true 'people's science'). Maxwell suggests that science undermines its own foundations if scientists fail to concern themselves with wider debates concerning human welfare.

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The Psychology of Literacy
by Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole
Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London Harvard University Press 1981 pp 234/235

In this book we have made a seemingly relentless descent from the general
to the specific. We began with grand and ancient speculations about the
impact of literacy on history, on philosophy, and on the minds of individ-
ual human beings; we ended with details of experiments on mundane,
everyday activities that would, under other circumstances, probably escape
our notice or our interest. Instead of generalized changes in cognitive abil-
ity, we found localized changes in cognitive skills manifested in relatively
esoteric experimental settings. Instead of qualitative changes in a person's
orientation to language, we found differences in selected features of speech
and communication. If we were to regard only general consequences as
worthy of serious attention, we would have to dismiss literacy activities
among the Vai as being of little psychological interest.
It seems obvious that we do not hold this view. However modest and spe-
cialized the outcomes, our studies among the Vai provide the first direct
evidence that literacy makes some difference to some skills in some con-
texts. In terms of concerns with which the research began, we believe it is
important that we have identified skills that are associated with literacy
learning and that are not byproducts of general learning experiences in the
classroom. We can summarize and describe these differences in a straight-
forward fashion (and this is one of the functions of this chapter), but the
critical question is: What do we make of them? Can we bring our evidence
of localized and specific changes into relation with scholars' grand specula-
tions about literacy and thought? Or is there no meeting ground between
the two sets of terms?
Here is the heart of the problem. To give a satisfactory account of the
nature and significance of the differences we found — and failed to find — we
would need to draw on some well-specified theory of cognition, especially a
theory spelling out the mechanisms by which social factors affect cognitive

variation. No such theory was at hand when we commenced our work, and none is at hand today to help us interpret it.

Within anthropology and sociology, we encounter theories of the "Great Divide" variety that look upon literacy as a key ingredient in the packet of social change which separates primitive from civilized, concrete from abstract, traditional from modern thought. Nor do we receive much help from current psychological theories. As we have sketched them in previous chapters, psychological theories of cognitive change have taken two disparate stances with respect to the power of literacy. A dominant trend is to consider cultural inventions, such as literacy, as unrelated to basic processes of intellectual development. literacy may influence how society does its work but not the structures of mental operations (Piagetian theory represents such a position. Piaget, 1977). Those psychologists who consider cultural inventions instrumental to cognitive development (Bruner and Olson, 1979, Greenfield, 1972) tend to see in literacy an "emergent force" that brings into existence entirely new mental structures or processes.

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The Future of Literacy in a Changing World
edited by Daniel A. Wagner
Oxford, New York, Beijing, Frankfurt, Sao Paulo, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto
Pergamon Press 1987, pp. 3/4

The "eradication" of illiteracy by the year 2000, as mentioned in the above citation, has been adopted as a goal of UNESCO and a significant number of its member states. In a manner similar to successful attempts to eliminate certain diseases, such as smallpox and malaria, the eradication of illiteracy is often seen as something that might be possible if only a big push could "inoculate" adults along with their children, so that all might be protected from illiteracy for generations to come. The main concern of this chapter is not whether the year 2000 is too optimistic, but rather how we can better understand the set of constraints on the promotion of literacy across the vast number of contexts extant in the contemporary industrialized and developing world. Some specialists, as cited above, see illiteracy in terms we might ascribe to a *medical* model, in which the germs of illiteracy must be wiped out. Others see illiteracy as primarily a *political* problem, where national will is the primary impediment. An alternative view, and the one ascribed to in the present discussion (and throughout much of the volume), is that literacy is a *sociocultural* phenomenon which, like culture itself, cannot (and probably should not) be radically changed; and that any intervention should be accompanied by serious consideration of the cultural contexts in which illiteracy and literacy are embedded.

A central paradox in efforts to reduce illiteracy in today's world is that so much effort has been invested, and so little knowledge gained, about how best to achieve success. The well-known Experimental World Literacy Program (UNESCO, 1976), according to one UNESCO expert, ended with very little information being used by subsequent literacy programs (Gillette, in press). After several decades of international attention and investment, the adult illiteracy rates of most developing countries are now relatively stable at roughly 35-55% in Africa and Asia (cf. UNESCO, 1985), and population growth has meant that the actual number of illiterates has actually grown dramatically (from 760 million in 1970 to 857 million in 1985). At the same time, interest in the nature and functions of literacy has greatly increased within the scientific community, although research findings are not widely known or disseminated within the policy-making community.

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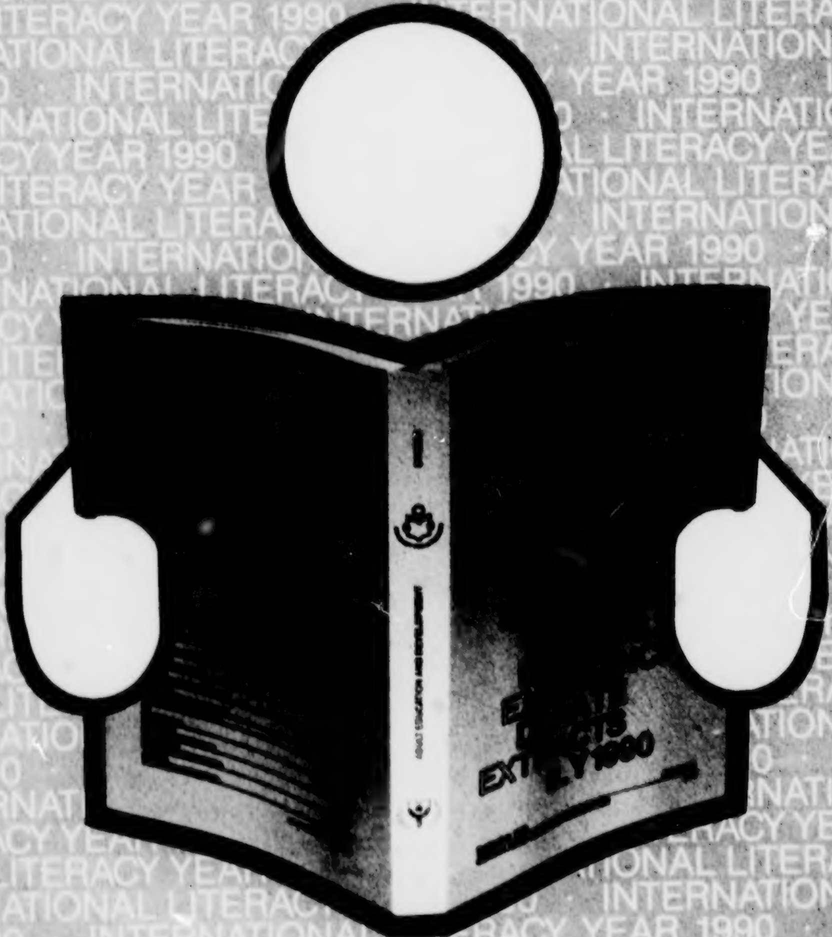


INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR 1990

Federico Mayor is the new Director-General of UNESCO. He was born in Spain. He is the successor of Amadou M'Bow.

Federico Mayor

Message from the Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of the celebration of International Literacy Day

(8 September 1988)

As from today, 8 September 1988, only 15 months remain before the start of International Literacy Year on 1 January 1990.

Ten years on from then we will reach the year 2000. What will be the state of education as the new millenium dawns? Will literacy be on the point of being vanquished or will adult illiterates still be numbered in hundreds of millions? Can we really look forward to that date when an estimated 890 million of our fellow human beings at present cannot even read or write? Will it be possible to talk of scientific literacy or of 'computer literacy' when basic literacy is still out of the reach of so many? Over 100 million children of primary school age are not enrolled in school; hundreds of millions of young people are forced to abandon their education before attaining an enduring level of literacy. They will be the adult illiterates of the early twenty-first century unless urgent remedial steps are taken.

This is why International Literacy Year 1990 is absolutely decisive if the international community is to give renewed impetus to the drive to eradicate illiteracy before the end of this century. One of UNESCO's most important tasks is to promote the fundamental human right to education for all without distinction of race, sex, language or religion. It must therefore be at the forefront of the United Nation system's efforts to rid the world of the scourge of illiteracy.

What could International Literacy Year achieve?

This will depend very much upon what the international community and, more particularly, governments and national communities around the world make of this occasion, hence my message to you today. International Literacy Year represents an unique opportunity to increase public awareness of the scope and danger of the problem of illiteracy, renew commitments, reinvigorate ongoing programmes and launch fresh initiatives for combatting illiteracy. The creation of a literate world is a challenge which calls for urgent, wide-ranging action in all walks of society, for each and every one of us has a stake in the outcome of this struggle and can and must contribute to it.

Literacy work does not take place in isolation; it is part and parcel of the overall quest for development and the battle against poverty. Literacy can be a precious component in many forms of training and productive activities. Taught in conjunction with agricultural skills, health and nutritional information, or numerous other subjects, literacy enables learners individually to pursue their education in different fields and constantly to renew and extend their knowledge. It is such individual self-fulfilment that UNESCO has a duty to promote.

In closing, I should like to address warm greetings from UNESCO to the millions of men and women throughout the world who devote their lives to the promotion of education and literacy, thus contributing selflessly to the creation of a better world. International Literacy Day is dedicated, above all, to them and to the indispensable work of enlightenment, development and solidarity in which they are engaged. Let us all join them in this great undertaking.

Poster contest — International Literacy Year — 1990

In preparation for International Literacy Year, UNESCO has organized a poster contest. The theme may be interpreted in any way that entrants desire and the winning poster will be used to represent, publicize and promote International Literacy Year.

Entries may be prepared individually or in groups, by professionals or amateur artists. One entry per individual or group may be submitted. The name, age, sex, distinction of 'amateur' or 'professional', nationality and address of each person responsible for each entry must be clearly indicated on the application.

Entries must be submitted through either a National Commission for UNESCO or an International Non-Governmental Organization in consultative relations with UNESCO. Each body may submit a maximum of two entries. Each entry must be accompanied by a short letter of transmission from the National Commission or NGO concerned. All costs are to be borne by entrants or their sponsoring body.

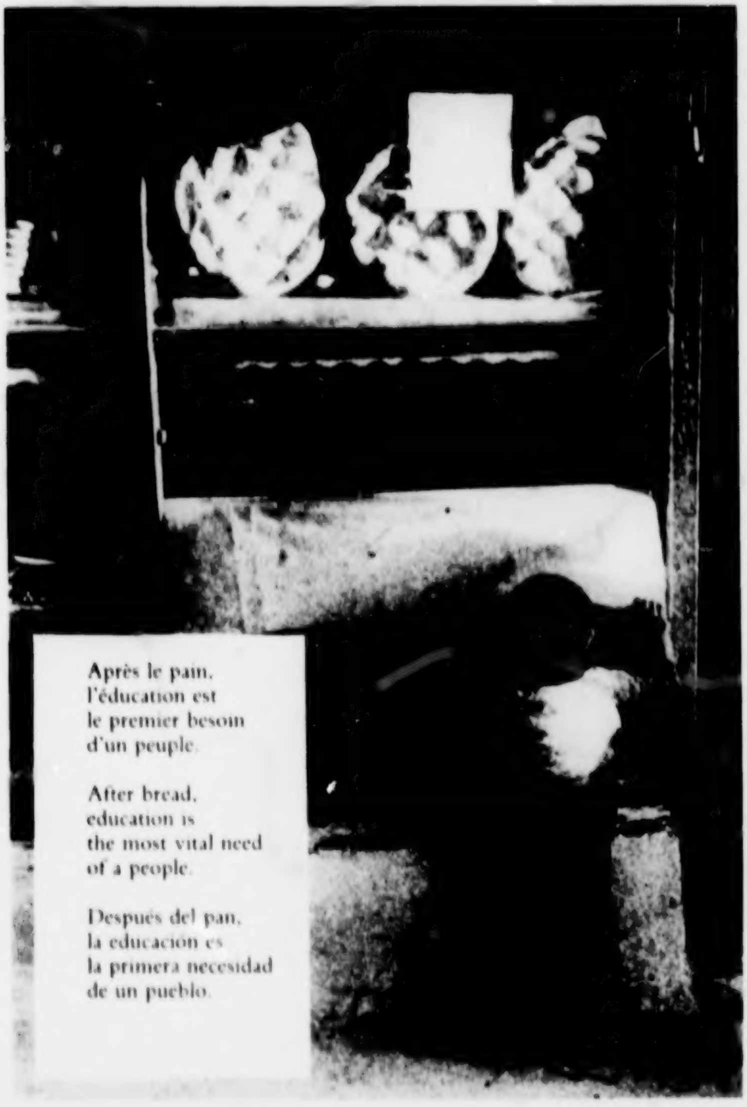
The deadline for entries is **December 31, 1988.** If you would like an entry form please write to ASPBAE, your local National Commission or UNESCO.

Entries should be sent (with the above proviso) to:

International Literacy Year Poster Contest, Director, ED/PLA, UNESCO,
7 place de Fontenoy, F-75700 Paris, France.

Receipt of all submissions will be acknowledged.

(Source: ASBAE Courier, July 1988, Learning Exchange, pp. 4 - 5.)



Après le pain,
l'éducation est
le premier besoin
d'un peuple.

After bread,
education is
the most vital need
of a people.

Después del pan,
la educación es
la primera necesidad
de un pueblo.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 1987 proclaiming 1990 as International Literacy Year and inviting UNESCO to assume the role of lead organisation for its preparation and observation. This action by the 42nd session of the General Assembly was in response to an appeal made by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-third session in 1985 to proclaim an international year, the observation of which would contribute to greater understanding by world public opinion of the various aspects of the problem of illiteracy and to intensified efforts to increase literacy and education.

United Nations proclaims 1990 International Literacy Year

Illiteracy is widely recognised as a major global problem. In 1985, there were an estimated 889 million adult (15 years +) illiterates in the world, more than a quarter (27.7 per cent) of the adult population. There were also more than 100 million children of primary-school age (6 to 11 years) who were not enrolled at school. These children are in danger of becoming the adult illiterates of the twenty-first century, unless prompt remedial action is taken. The majority of adult illiterates are women, the illiteracy rate being

34.9% for women as compared to 20.5% for men. Over 98% of the world's illiterates live in the developing nations, nearly three-quarters of them, 666 million, in Asia alone. The highest rate of illiteracy, however, is in Africa: 54% of the adult population as compared with 36% in Asia and 17% in Latin America. Mass illiteracy constitutes a serious obstacle to development and modernisation in many developing countries. It affects productivity of workers, hampers the organisation of health, sanitation and other public services, complicates the creation of political structures based upon popular consent and, in these and other ways, hinders the progress of the individual and the society. For this reason, many developing countries have made the elimination of illiteracy a national priority.

The industrialised countries are also affected. In recent years, many countries which felt they had resolved the problem of illiteracy fifty or more years ago have discovered a related phenomenon: functional illiteracy. The functionally illiterate are usually able to read, but at a level which is inadequate to find a job in a modern economy or to participate effectively in increasingly complex societies. Surveys have indicated that perhaps 5% or more of the population in certain countries suffer from severe handicaps in reading and writing. A much larger proportion of the population reports less serious literacy-related difficulties.

The UNESCO proposal for an International Literacy Year is linked to the formulation of a plan of action to assist member states in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000. In a preliminary document examining the possibilities and problems of implementing such a plan of action, UNESCO stresses that the task cannot be achieved unless the necessary political will and commitment in member states is aroused, a broad movement of international solidarity created and the active participation of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, including particularly community groups working at the grassroots level, ensured. One of the objectives of International Literacy Year will be to create favourable conditions for launching a decade-long plan of action, extending from 1990 to the end of the century, by mobilising international public opinion in support of literacy efforts by governments and organisations. The plan of action will be built upon regional inter-governmental programmes for promoting literacy which have been launched with the aid of UNESCO in the Latin American, Carribbean, African, Asian and Pacific regions. A similar programme is in preparation for the Arab states.

The objectives for International Literacy Year approved by the 24th session of the UNESCO General Conference in the autumn of 1987 are:

(i) increasing action by the governments of member states afflicted by illiteracy or functional illiteracy to eliminate these problems, particularly through education in rural areas and urban slums, in favour of women and girls and among populations and groups having special educational problems or needs;

(ii) increasing public awareness of the scope, nature and implications of illiteracy as well as of the means and conditions for combatting it. In particular, an effort should be made to alert public opinion to the high rate of illiteracy among adult women and its implication for the well-being of their children, the lower rate of school participation among girls than among boys and the association between illiteracy, on the one hand, and poverty, underdevelopment and economic, social and cultural exclusion on the other;

(iii) increasing popular participation, within and among countries, in efforts to combat illiteracy, particularly through activities of governmental and non-governmental organisations, voluntary associations and community groups;

(iv) increasing co-operation and solidarity among member states in the struggle against illiteracy;

(v) increasing co-operation within the United Nations system and, more generally, among all intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the struggle against illiteracy;

(vi) using International Literacy Year for launching the plan of action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000 and for addressing issues of critical importance to the progress of literacy such as reducing primary-school drop-out rates and establishing post-literacy programmes to prevent relapse into illiteracy.

UNESCO is establishing a special ILY secretariat to work with governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in organising a programme for the Year which will emphasize efforts to make the seriousness of the problem of illiteracy better known to world public opinion and place particular stress upon concrete measures to promote literacy through extending primary education to all children and providing literacy instruction to out-of-school youth and adults.

A number of governments are already planning large-scale actions which will be launched during International Literacy Year. China, for example, which has made impressive progress in combatting illiteracy, has announced plans for launching an intensive five-year campaign to provide instruction to 80 million illiterates in the 12 to 45 year age-group. Each national effort must, of course, take into account the particular circumstances and culture of the country concerned. Becoming literate in Chinese, for example, requires mastering 2,000 to 3,000 characters or ideographs, a more demanding and complicated task than learning the 26 or so letters required to master languages using a Latin script.

Non-governmental organisations are also actively engaged in planning programmes for the year. The International Council for Adult Education, with headquarters in Toronto, Canada, has, for example, organised a Task Force for International Literacy Year to mobilise its national and regional branches around the world in focusing special attention upon literacy activities and in encouraging governments to launch new literacy programmes or step up ongoing ones.

ILY — A Practical Guide to Some Possible Activities

The ILY-Unit (International Literacy Year) of UNESCO has prepared a practical guide in answer to the call of an international symposium in the Mongolian People's Republic in May, 1987 that »International Literacy Year should not be a 'celebration' but a summons to action«. Whoever is interested in doing something to improve literacy work not only on literacy day but throughout the year should ask for this guide which is meant for non-governmental organizations, UNESCO-clubs, associated schools and other interested groups, by writing to:

ILY-Unit ED/PLA, UNESCO, 7, place de Fontanoy, 75700 Paris, France.

The International Council for Adult Education commissioned a needs assessment survey for the International Literacy Year and invited all members to contribute. We are printing here the executive summary only, while a full copy of the report is available from ICAE, 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S2R4. The report was published in May 1988. Judith Marshall is an education consultant who has been associated with ICAE for many years. She worked from 1978 - 1984 in the Adult Education Department of the Ministry of Education in Mozambique.

Judith Marshall

International Council for Adult Education Needs Assessment Survey International Literacy Year

The International Council for Adult Education, as part of its contribution to promoting International Literacy Year, undertook a Needs Assessment Survey of its member organizations. A nine page questionnaire was sent out in early January, designed to both seek information and, at the same time, mobilize for ILY. The results of the Needs Assessment Survey are presented below. The survey has been conducted by Judith Marshall.

Perhaps the most striking result of the Needs Assessment Survey is the very high level of response to it. Questionnaires were filled in by 5 ICAE Regional Member Associations, 35 National Member Associations and 2 Sectoral Members, for a total of 42 responses. This is by far the highest response to any questionnaire or survey sent out by ICAE over the years, indicating a return rate of about 47 per cent. All but three respondents gave full replies and many supplied richly detailed descriptions of their goals and plans, apprehensions and expectations for International Literacy Year.

We take this as a strong indication of the degree of energy and commitment ICAE members are prepared to devote to literacy, and feel that the volume of the response, combined with the creativity of many of the proposed programme activities bode well for ILY.

I. What is your perception of the major task(s) in promoting literacy in your country/region?

The perception of major tasks for ILY furnished by the respondents clustered around three poles. One pole focussed on ways to strengthen broader participation in literacy at the grass-roots, seeking mechanisms to build national and regional networks of literacy workers in order to share experiences, training, materials etc. A second pole focussed on government responsibility for literacy and mechanisms to lobby government for increasing commitment and support. A third group of respondents focussed on mechanisms to gain greater public support for literacy. Other ideas of major tasks for ILY included strengthening programmes, training and regional linkages.

II. What kind of year should International Literacy Year be?

1. What are the major expectations and goals of your organization / network for the ILY?

The vision of what kind of year ILY would be converged mainly around ideas of using ILY to create greater public awareness about illiteracy, thereby creating greater political will to tackle the question. Another fairly large group of Member Associations see it as a year for dramatic advances toward the actual eradication of illiteracy (some in 1990, others by 2000) and/or the expansion of literacy programmes. Smaller numbers look forward to the year as one to establish national and regional networks, strengthen training, carry out workshops and symposia, develop mother tongue literacy, encourage NGO involvement or develop methodologies and theorizations of »popular literacy«.

2. What are your main fears of what the ILY will (or will not) bring?

The main fear was that ILY would be a year characterized by a lot of words without any concrete programmes and resources to back them up. Several respondents focussed on the need for financial resources, with »no budget« as their greatest fear. Closely related was the fear that it would be a »purely ritual occasion«, that it would remain the »monopoly of government« and that, in the end, it would siphon off resources from the local to the international plane. Another fear was that a narrow concept of literacy, reducing it merely to reading and writing, would emerge, or worse still, that a »pathology« of the illiterate would be constructed. Several respondents feared that, with success, their countries would not be able to meet the demands of a literate society.

3. The ICAE in its consultations thus far about ILY has come to envision a year with the following characteristics. Please rank each of them in order of importance as goals for ILY and indicate any activities that you plan to carry out that could contribute to realizing them.

The ICAE expects a year that will link literacy to the achievements of social, economic and political democracy.
Very important 30 Important 8 Not very relevant 0

The ICAE expects a year that will result in strengthened permanent structures for literacy and adult education at both government and NGO level.
Very important 30 Important 7 Not very relevant 0

The ICAE expects a year that will mark the beginning of a 10 year intensive effort through to the year 2000 to dramatically reduce illiteracy on this globe.
Very important 28 Important 9 Not very relevant 0

The ICAE expects a year that will result in increased empowerment and not increased dependency.
Very important 25 Important 13 Not very relevant 1

The ICAE expects a year that will recognize that illiteracy is a problem of both the industrialized and non-industrialized nations.
Very important 22 Important 14 Not very relevant 1

The ICAE expects a year that will mobilize resources from the grassroots and factory floors through to governments and educational institutions.
Very important 21 Important 16 Not very relevant 0

The ICAE expects a year that will not confuse a campaign against illiteracy with a campaign against illiterate people!
Very important 21 Important 11 Not very relevant 3

The ICAE expects a year that will strengthen the organizations and structures of the landless, the poor workers, women and indigenous people.

Very important 20 Important 12 Not very relevant 6

The ICAE expects a year that will recognize that when so many people do not read and write, it is our societies themselves which are illiterate and not the people.

Very important 19 Important 13 Not very relevant 3

The ICAE expects a year that will create jobs in literacy and not in arms production.

Very important 19 Important 4 Not very relevant 14

The ICAE expects a year that does not remain the property possession of empty and pious declarations and government admonitions.

Very important 12 Important 12 Not very relevant 4

4. List other possible activities that you plan to undertake for ILY.

The survey data indicated a wide diversity of activities, all of which are listed in the appendix. A lot of emphasis was placed on comparative studies of effective literacy activities, and on development of literacy activities for particular groups or areas (women, urban and rural dwellers, indigenous people, people of a given region). A number of countries plan activities to build a more literate environment and to disseminate information about literacy, including rural newspapers and libraries and even electronic bulletin boards. Specific events planned ranged from study visits and surveys of NGO involvement in literacy to an international event for peace.

III. Organizing and financing the ILY

1. Will your organization establish a specific committee, task force or other mechanism for organizing activities related to ILY?

Yes (23) Uncertain (11) No (2)

2. If »Yes«, please indicate the planned composition of this group and the role it is expected to play.

The composition varies widely, with about half of the countries establishing committees composed mainly of officials and literacy specialists while the other half planned to set up committees with broad representation from popular groups.

3. Does your organization plan to establish a special budget or allocation to finance ILY activities?

Yes (13) Uncertain (17) No (8)

4. Are there specific resources that you lack for carrying out your activities during the ILY (human, material, financial, technical, documentation, media)?

All except one organization indicated they lacked resources. The main need identified was that of financial resources, with most respondents not foreseeing enough funds to carry out the variety of programmes planned for ILY. Areas needing funding ranged from paper, pencils and printing facilities to needs for technical assistance, documentation and travel budgets for regional workshops and exchanges.

5. Are there appropriate inputs that the ICAE could make into revolving some of these questions around scarce resources: If so, how?

Virtually all of the replies were in the affirmative with most answers clustered around ICAE's role in channelling and mobilizing resources, particularly in terms of contacts with donors.

After funding, the two areas where resources are most scarce are documentation and information on approaches and experiences of literacy, on the one hand, and human and financial resources for exchanges and seminars linking up networks and regions on the other.

IV. Programmes and activities

1. In addition to sustaining the work of the Task Force on Literacy, the ICAE plans to carry out the following activties in relation to ILY. Please rank them in terms of their importance for your organization/network.

Identify advocacy efforts with the development assistance agencies to allocate more resources in support of literacy work.
Very important 22 Important 12 Not so important 2

Find different ways to support members' associations in promoting ILY.
Very important 20 Important 16 Not so important 4

Focus ICAE's next World Assembly in 1989 on the theme of literacy.
Very important 18 Important 14 Not so important 3

Continue to lobby towards raising the status of literacy at the UNESCO headquarters in terms of staffing and financial resources.
Very important 17 Important 13 Not so important 6

Prepare a guide/directory on the policies and financial support of the major funding agencies.
Very important 17 Important 13 Not so important 6

Strengthen and increase South-South cooperation and exchange visits in literacy work.
Very important 16 Important 16 Not so important 5

Promote increased cooperation between NGOs in literacy work.
Very important 16 Important 18 Not so important 1

Strengthen the literacy component of ICAE's information dissemination programme.
Very important 12 Important 19 Not so important 4

2. In addition to your responses under III4., are there kinds of support ICAE can provide you with in promoting ILY?

Only a few respondents had additional requests for support from ICAE. These tended to center on support in networking, with several requests for ICAE to play a stronger role in disseminating information of other countries' activities and experiences and/or facilitating the translation and distribution of particular experiences of literacy.

3. What are your organization's plans for cooperation with other organizations during ILY?

The great majority of those responding envisage some programme of exchange, or closer collaboration within and between regions. In a number of cases, these exchanges are part of broader projects of research and systematic reflection. Joint publications are frequently mentioned, as well as much more sharing of human resources.

4. How does your organization plan to lobby governments for more commitment during ILY?

The majority of the respondents indicate strong working links already established with government officials, and a mixture of strategies including preparation of briefs and statements, appointment of joint government/NGO bodies for ILY, and lobbying through specific organizations.

5. Sixty percent of the world's adult illiterates are women. These women also constitute the major food producers in the rural areas of many countries and are key figures in mothering, and hence preparation for school, of future generations. Does your organization have plans for special activities for women during ILY?

While two of the respondents indicated that the rate of illiteracy was actually lower among women than men in their countries (Sri Lanka, Jamaica) and others indicated them to be equal (Canada, Australia), the great majority of the respondents indicated that ILY initiatives were being worked out in close collaboration with organizations promoting the advancement of women. There were several suggestions of affirmative actions, including the mounting of a special »Women and Literacy« conference and increased consciousness about the need to remove the obstacles to women's participation in literacy.

6. There is much critical debate about literacy. Many planners and policy makers view it straightforwardly as an individual good and broader social benefit, »The more of it the better«.

Historically, however, literacy has often been a means of social control, imposing a language, a way of speaking it and a set of texts defining what constitutes »knowledge«.
Today many popular groups are working to create new forms of literacy in which the illiterate »speak their lives, read the world and write history«. Should ICAE member associations encourage some of this critical debate during ILY? If yes, do you have any suggestions on how this can be done?

Apart from two or three respondents who feared that critical debate might diminish the support being solicited for increased literacy action, most of the respondents were very keen for more debate about literacy. Several suggested sponsoring key publications, promoting a special series of case studies, contracting qualified researchers to work on the theme, using *Convergence* etc. There was concern to make such critical debate accessible, including the idea of using audio-visual as well as written material and promoting gatherings of literacy practitioners in debate.

7. Are there particular inter-regional or international events or activities that should be encouraged through ICAE for ILY?

A number of concrete suggestions were made, with the suggestion that any such activity organized by ICAE should be highly analytical, with solid critical analysis of programmes and policies of national governments and UN agencies. Some of the suggestions included:

- an international event of »popular literacy« in the Third World
- situational analysis workshop with participants from Africa, South America and South East Asia
- regional or international exchanges and gatherings of literacy workers and learners at grass roots level
- writing composition on literacy

- ICAE intervention for international literacy day in 1990
- activities to exchange experiences and documentation.

8. What are the major lessons your organization has learned from other international years?

Successful strategies that should be repeated:

The positive lessons drawn from other international years clustered around three major areas. A number of respondents felt that international years provided a positive opportunity to unite a broad range of groups for common action, to arrive at a clearer definition of the issues and to identify more accurately the realities of the group in focus. Several respondents expressed concern about the need for activities not just during but pre and post ILY, and a number felt that during other international years, the achievement had been far below the expectations created. One regional organization encapsulated their major lesson in one phrase — international declarations without international support and financing have virtually no impact.

Approaches that should be avoided:

There was a strong consensus about what should be avoided during ILY, namely »ritualistic« celebrations full of »fanfare and rhetoric« with »high officials only« and no »involvement of the people« or follow-up.

9. Any other areas of concern for the planning of International Literacy Year?

The additional areas of concern listed were as diverse as the countries replying. The only area of consensus was around the need for more systematic research and evaluation, both of current literacy programmes and their impact and of the process and products of ILY itself. Other areas of concern mentioned included the desirability of developing guidelines and materials for global strategies of literacy, the need for approaches that simultaneously tackled literacy in the formal and non-formal system and the hope that ILY would provide an opportunity to strengthen UNESCO's credibility.

V. Implications for action for ICAE

Amidst the richness and diversity of the replies to the questionnaire, a number of themes began to emerge which are important for shaping ICAE's programme for International Literacy Year. Some of the most important areas are highlighted below, with recommendations for actions to be taken by ICAE.

1. Diverse approaches to literacy

The survey responses have implicit in them very different assumptions about literacy. Posed at their most extreme, they might be characterized as follows. Some respondents take as a given fact that literacy must be approached through broad campaigns with massive government support and large-scale mobilization of public opinion. Implicit is the notion that the illiterate members of society are deficient, as producers, as citizens, as parents, and that state sponsored literacy campaigns can remedy that deficiency.

Closely related to this vision of literacy is the attribution to literacy of a vast range of powers. For the individual, literacy is meant to lead directly to employment, higher wages, improved health and capacity to care for one's family, and increased personal happiness. For society, higher levels of literacy are meant to lead to greater productivity, economic development and increased citizen participation.

Another group of respondents tends to understand literacy in a dramatically different way. They point to the need to further conceptualize »popular literacy«, approaching literacy as but one of the components in a broader strategy of organization/conscientization of subordinated groups, urban slum dwellers, rural villagers, women and indigenous people. Literacy is approached through local, small-scale programmes in cooperatives, trade unions, women's groups and community organizations. These provide not just language skills, but also a kind of »social literacy«, all in the context of a broader strategy for empowering local communities and building up new forms of »civil society«.

The survey results point to both implicit assumptions about how to approach literacy, yet at the same time some widespread anxieties and some readiness to place all assumptions under scrutiny. There is a recurrent need expressed throughout the survey for more comparative studies of actual experiences of literacy, more opportunities to look closely at the impact of increased literacy skills on the lives, communities and societies of real women and men.

Recommendation:

1. That ICAE seek ways to support national and regional actions through workshops, seminars, participatory research etc. in which different experiences of literacy can be analyzed, including their impact on the larger community and society.

2. That ICAE explore the feasibility of incorporating such actions into a major »state of the art« study of literacy for ILY. The actions outlined above could be expanded into a world-wide process of consultations and investigations, carried out through participatory processes, which would result in an NGO/popular movement assessment of where we are in literacy and how we should proceed. This could serve to shift the terms of the debate on literacy.

This study could be presented to the ICAE Assembly in Bangkok in January 1990 to launch International Literacy Year.

2. Sharing expertise on literacy

A recurrent theme in the study was the need felt by many countries for additional human resources. Many respondents expressed the need for access to people knowledgeable and experienced in the field of literacy. Some respondents even spoke of the desirability of forming international teams of experts and animators, to be made available to ICAE affiliates during ILY.

Recommendation: That ICAE Secretariat establish a »clearing house« for committed and experienced literacy experts who are prepared to make themselves available for 1 - 3 month consultancy contracts during ILY. These literacy specialists could be financed as short-term cooperantes by such agencies as CUSO/SUCO and WUSC in Canada and their European counterparts. Member organizations of ICAE, both national and regional, would be able to request these consultants, individually or in teams, for particular workshops, evaluation studies, training events, participatory research projects, etc. during ILY.

3. Access to documentation on literacy

Many respondents indicate a sense of isolation and the need to have much more access not only to other people's experiences and reflections on literacy, but also to their teaching materials, approaches to training, etc. The need to have access in forms not limited to print was also expressed.

Recommendation: That ICAE consider establishing a special programme of publishing and documentation on literacy for its affiliates, including collecting, commissioning, translating and disseminating useful studies. Materials should include teaching materials, documents, videos etc. Innovative strategies for getting these materials into circulation should be included, taking into consideration the limited foreign exchange resources of possible users.

4. Exchanging problems and successes in literacy

A notable aspect of the responses to the Needs Assessment Survey was the frequently expressed desire to connect up with others involved in work on literacy, through national, regional and international linkages. This desire to share and exchange experiences in literacy was not seen as the prerogative of senior planners, policy makers and experts, but of literacy workers at grass roots, the women and men actually learning to read and write, the voluntary teachers, the young coordinators and technical assistants. Concrete suggestions emerged for regional gatherings of literacy teachers or students, and for the creation of international teachers' brigades to work in particular countries, e.g. to work in Nicaragua during the year marking the 10th Anniversary of the Literacy Crusade, which will also be celebrated in 1990.

Recommendation: That ICAE support specific regional and international initiatives that allow literacy workers at the base to share their experiences.

5. Women and literacy

Many respondents concurred with the assertion that there was a need to respond to the particular situation of women and literacy. Many indicated close collaboration with women's organizations and their efforts for ILY. Few organizations spoke of programmes specifically geared to women's experiences of illiteracy, however, and only one respondent referred to the need to analyze the structural constraints on women's acquisition and use of literacy skills. (Respondents replying to the questionnaire included 31 men, 7 women and three people whose gender could not be identified by their names.)

Recommendation: That the feasibility of a special consultative process on women and literacy be explored in which women themselves would be the primary participants.

6. Literacy and the year 2000

The responses to the survey give no clear indication of how much ICAE affiliates are really seeing ILY as the starting point for a decade of concerted action on literacy. A few spoke of »eradication by the year 2000«. Many underscored the need for ongoing work before, during and after ILY. There seemed little indication of clear, realizable goals and strategies for the forthcoming decade.

Recommendation:

1. That ICAE launch ILY with the »state of the (people's) art« study on literacy mentioned above, endeavouring to present an NGO/popular movement analysis of where we are in literacy. That ICAE affiliates, armed with this study and, hopefully, more appropriate questions to pose about approaches to literacy, be encouraged to use ILY as a year of investigation and reflection and debate.

2. This process of investigation, reflection and debate on approaches to literacy could culminate in the development of multiple strategies for literacy for the next decade. These NGO plans of action for literacy could be presented at some common international event or with a coordinated strategy to publicize them simultaneously throughout the world, through popular rallies, re-

leasing them to the press, handing them over to government, etc. In this way, the end result of ILY would, in fact, be the launching of a decade of action for literacy.

7. Funding for literacy

Virtually all respondents foresee lack of funding as the major constraint on effective actions for literacy. This takes the form of funding as such, for courses, workshops, seminars etc., and the actual material input needed for effective work in literacy — paper, pencils, transport, A-V material etc.

Recommendation: That ICAE make a concerted effort to alert both government funding bodies and NGOs to the potential for solid advances in literacy in the context of ILY, endeavouring to mobilize a significant flow of new financial and material resources for the programmes of its member associations.

An **International Task Force on Literacy** has been set up by the **International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)** «with the purpose of mobilizing non-governmental organizations and stimulating their active cooperation in the planning and activities for the International Literacy Year and all through the rest of the decade of this century». About 20 adult educators from all over the world met for the first time in October 1987 in Toronto and a report on their meeting has been published: *International Literacy Year: Beginning to Act*, published by Yusuf Kassam. Available from: ICAE, 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2R4, Canada.

A follow-up meeting in June 1988 in West-Berlin was organized by ICAE in cooperation with the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). It provided a good forum to discuss progress of the work in the different regions of the world and prepare a framework of possible activities and a division of different tasks ahead under the organisations and people represented. The following are the main areas:

- Public awareness
- Creating and strengthening literacy structures
- The great debate
- Research and evaluation
- Task force activities.

If you want more information and are interested in cooperation, please write to ICAE.

Lalita Ramdas from the Indian organization Ankur participated in both meetings of the International Task Force on Literacy in 1987 and 1988. She contributed papers at both meetings giving her perspective on literacy strategies in India and the International Literacy Year. This manuscript is a combination of both contributions.

Lalita Ramdas

India — Literacy strategies and International Literacy Year

National Literacy Mission

It is appropriate that this report is being finalised on May 5th 1988! Today the nation is witnessing the official 'launching' of the National Literacy Mission by the Prime Minister. The Mission on Literacy forms one of the 'technology' missions currently on the anvil of developmental thrusts in the country. The others are dealing with equally critical areas such as drinking water, health & immunisation, and energy sources.

The Education Secretary has rightly said that the Literacy Mission is not merely a matter of technology alone, but that it is, in essence, a sociological mission.

While the mission has been conceptualised with the utmost sincerity and good intentions by a small, dedicated group, the questions regarding its actual implementation and effectiveness in the field continue to remain alive!

Involving NGOs

Government itself has categorically stated that it intends to involve NGOs to a substantial degree in the current literacy drive, which aims to make a total of some 80 million illiterate persons in the 15-35 age group literate; 30m. by 1990 and 50m. by 1995. On paper the targets and the planning, both for training and infrastructure, appear to be fairly realistic. As always, however, the situation in reality, especially in the assessment of the Voluntary Sector, is rather different.

By and large the NGO's view is that unless literacy forms an intrinsic part of the on-going struggle by people for a greater/equal share in the national cake, it **really has very little relevance** in the lives of the bulk of the poor and marginalised. Many NGOs are today concentrating their efforts in mobilising the people around the critical issues of land, forests, employment etc. — basically on the fundamental questions of economic and political power. For large numbers literacy may or may not find a place on the agenda except tangentially as an occasional functional requirement. It is also largely because of the above reasons that the bulk of government-run literacy programmes exist more on paper than in reality — hard data of course is virtually impossible to come by.

An NGO view of government programmes

In the above context I would like to quote the words of an activist working amongst tribals and peasants in rural Rajasthan — one of our least developed states with a literacy rate which is among the lowest in the land!

»On government literacy programmes: These are a complete and utter failure. Of the 300 classes financed in our area, not a **single one** actually functions, not even partially. In the 30 centres around Ghantali (the village where she lives), not a single one operates. The young tribals see the Rupees 70/– (approx. $ 5/–) as a stipend and source of livelihood. Superiors take bribes and so do not check, and in turn pay their superiors bribes in order to stay in the job etc. etc. Twice a year the Education Department holds camps for the instructors and that is that. I have been watching this farce for the past 8-10 years! Forget the draft, it is not relevant to anything!

On NGOs: I do not know much, as there are none in my area. But in Udaipur (district capital) things are slightly better; but even there, with more and more funds coming in and better salaries, NGOs no longer attract only the committed but anyone looking for employment, and hence things are becoming more like government departments. They normally run a few 'model' centres where visitors are taken, and the rest . . . ?

Literacy combined with mass programmes can empower, but divorced from this it only ends up as a stipend for instructors. Literacy in Vietnam, China, Guinea-Bissau was one thing, because it was linked to a genuine people's movement on more fundamental levels . . . but here, if anyone tries to 'empower' through literacy, he/she will have to face the wrath and reprisals of the vested interests. Hence empowerment cannot be done through literacy alone; but literacy can certainly be a powerful support to a larger movement.«

Some might well say that the above view is harsh, cynical or extreme! I would like to say that it is an honest and critical assessment of reality and comes from one who has worked and lived in one of the most deprived areas of the state of Rajasthan in Western India. The conditions in other similarly backward states is not substantially different.

What can be done? The role of NGOs

Realistically speaking, the NGOs themselves are scattered far and wide physically, divided ideologically and on issue prioritisation, and cannot hope to match or muster up between them anything near the kind of resources or infrastructure which government can command. There is hardly any networking amongst them, and certainly not on literacy.

Some workable options are discussed below:

1. **Data and information gathering and dissemination after analysis**, about existing approaches, techniques in literacy and adult education that **have worked**! Production and exchange of materials in adult education.

   As far as one knows no such attempts have been made, even in terms of something like ascertaining the status of literacy work in the priority lists of NGOs. *Ankur, a small Delhi-based NGO, has outlined a scheme along these lines, but even that has taken six months to get an initial sanction!

2. **Intervention in existing government infrastructure and availing of those resources where possible.** This will mean

closer interaction with a view to improving basic delivery and efficiency alone.

3. **Intensive concentration of available resources — both material and human — into ensuring better quality of educational input for children at the primary levels, both in the formal and non-formal systems.** This will at least take care of one dimension of the problem of illiteracy — namely ensure that there will be fewer adult illiterates in the next generation.

4. **Plan for extensive training interventions wherever possible** — especially in government training programmes; and with special reference to content, issues, relevance, values and attitudes. Some steps have already begun by way of an animator's training being undertaken by groups of NGOs with the aim of mobilising women and youth.

5. **Facilitate increased networking between NGOs.** Some attempts at forming loose coalitions are already underway with one or two groups/individuals taking the initiative. These need to be identified, strengthened and supported, and then dialogues initiated so as to focus on the literacy issue — the difficulties faced, need for a common focus and policy etc. and with an ultimate view to provide a powerful impetus and critique in formulating/influencing/changing government programmes.

6. **Forming links with sympathetic government officials and others at all levels;** this is extraordinarily important given the existing system of power and patronage. Where a high level official is able to recognise and push strongly for imaginative schemes and action, no matter how unorthodox, it is amazing how much can be done. Problems are of course encountered very quickly at various points down the line — where tired, bored and uninspired bureaucrats are those who actually pro-

cess cases, pass files, even intervene in training and actually monitor and control programmes in the field.

7. **Special input for encouraging participation of girls and women.** The National Literacy Mission document contains several references and provisions for motivating certain groups for education and literacy. A special Committee for the Eradication of Female Illiteracy has existed for some years. The Constitution places special emphasis on the need for women to be emancipated and educated, in every sense to be equal to men. All this notwithstanding, the age-old preference for sons and the tendency to confine girls to home and housework has not substantially changed especially in rural India. Mere education in itself is not enough — it is a question of the nature and content of that education. One just has to study and analyse the role of substantial numbers of so-called 'educated' middle-class girls/women who, despite 15 - 18 years of formal education, still remain relatively voiceless and essentially powerless on any issue of importance — be it within or outside the family and home. Here again it is important to motivate groups and individuals to play a role in designing the right kind of materials and input which would provoke a much more lively debate and discussion on issues pertaining to the role and status of women and the need and even urgency to provide women with new rights, a new status, and a new independence in society. This should be carried out vigorously at all levels where it is possible to promote and propagate and influence opinion-building.

8. **Facilitating interaction between academics and activists to build a lobby for literacy.** The academic community in the region has been conspicuous by its relative lack of involvement in the issue of education for the masses, the cause of adult education or literacy. There is a need to raise this awareness and concern through a variety of methods. For example, the Indian Association of Women's Studies is holding its Fourth Con-

ference in December this year in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The theme is 'Rural Women: Poverty, Struggle & Survival' and the occasion provides an excellent forum for bringing together women from various walks of life with a serious interest in women's studies. Since I have been asked to jointly co-ordinate the sub-theme on education, I have specifically requested speakers to examine the issues on education for women in the context of both the National Literacy Mission and the International Literacy Year. We hope to be able to invite women from rural areas to attend and to share their views regarding the kind of education, or lack or education, that they have experienced in their own lives.

9. **Re-defining literacy as empowerment and striving to have this definition accepted by policy makers**, and particularly by many in the developed world for whom the written word continues to have the primary, if not the only, legitimacy! To many of us it is very clear that until certain fundamental imbalances in society — social, political, and economic — are put right, we in the developing world will have to fight for a much more open acceptance for the fact that those who can stand up for themselves in a hostile world and ensure that that world listens to their voices, **are** in fact more literate in an essential sense, than many other so-called educated people! During a recent visit to a rural development project in Andhra Pradesh, we watched in silent admiration while a group of strong and articulate, illiterate, rural women debated, discussed and resolved certain tricky issues relating to problems in their village. They had never been to school, and barely stirred out of their homes, but experience in a women's co-operative had empowered them to become independent, take their own decisions and identify and work towards achieving certain common, collective goals. And I thought to myself — How can I call these women illiterate? They have learned to read, write and to some extent, control their world; and if that is not literacy, **what is?**

Mobilising members of the Armed Forces

This country has an incredible, untapped reservoir of highly trained personnel, who are for the most part also well educated. Tentative efforts and preliminary discussions are already underway with officials, both at the Ministries of Education and Defence, to explore how best we can push the system to harness at least part of this valuable human resource for much needed developmental input.

For a start we are taking a close look at two possibilities:

- — Using ex-servicemen, especially since there are vast numbers who leave after short service commissions and who could be well trained to become community animators, literacy teachers and then link up with other groups in their own village/town etc.
- — Motivating the hundreds of existing women's welfare organisations in the service, to volunteer to donate their time and skills in teaching/learning programmes. Within the service itself there are need and scope, too.

This latter impetus has been made accessible because of my own assocation (through marriage) with the Armed Forces and shows exactly what I mean when I say that we need a larger number of individuals to be mobilised right across the length and breadth of this land who would be willing and able to utilise every possible channel for talking and persuading people to become involved with literacy, health and major problems of under-development.

Strategies at the international level: some views

Most people have become cynical at the mention of 'yet another' International Year of one thing or other. Since so many have been held, they too have become a routine matter of no great significance.

What do the people feel?

For most of those who are the 'targets' of such declarations, the pronouncements remain largely unheard and unknown and it is immaterial whether they take place or not. Their lives have not changed as a result of several International Years!

Our workers — their view:

Our community workers and teachers are different. They are unsure as to the actual benefits of declaring such »International Years«. Their concerns and hopes centre around questions as to whether it will help them get a decent space / building in which to work and a book in the hand of each learner or whether it will solve immediate questions of how to deal with the drought or the revival of *sati* (women burning themselves on their husband's funeral pyre) — or how to cope with communal passions and violence? Many believe today that we should mobilise efforts to ensure that children get a decent education and become literate and that is the best method for long-term adult literacy.

An official view

Predictably, government functionaries were non-committal, or had not yet heard of the IYL and had no clear idea as to what they should or could do with such a year. They were more worried whether their efforts to lobby for financial support for the Adult Education Mission would bear fruit or not.

Others

As for many others who are working in the NGO and academic world, in the »concerned public« category — the following would sum up their views:

World Organisations routinely and grandiosely declare International Year after International Year! Goverments and UN groups whip into action. Millions are spent on the production of glossy brochures, campaigns, hand-outs, seminars and consultations. Activity peaks into a **frenzy** at mid-year. The **media** too gets into the act to keep the **issue** alive.

Hardly has the curtain fallen on the Year for Women, then all that material is discarded and preparations are underway for the Year of the… Child? the Disabled? the Aged? the Homeless? **for peace?**

People are exhausted, people have run races for famine, for non-violence or a few other causes — but now we can get back to **»business as usual«.**

Meanwhile, the suppressed woman, the naked child, the deaf, the blind, the pavement dweller and the elderly can rest in peace and satisfaction that the world has actually remembered their existence for **one whole year.**

Who draws up the balance sheet at the end of it all? Or is it only left to busy accountants and auditors of countless organisations the world over?

So, if there is to be a Literacy Year — can we ensure that:

a) No unnecessary glitter or fanfare should precede or follow it?

b) All resources should be spent in actual delivery services or programmes in which the target groups directly participate or directly benefit?

c) Co-operation in terms of pooling experiences, resources, both material and human, and facilitating increased research and mass production of quality materials should take priority in resource allocation? Especially sharing experiences and knowledge from countries where literacy campaigns have succeeded in the most difficult circumstances — e.g. Nicaragua, Guinea Bissau, China, Cuba, Tanzania, to name a few. We need to find out about others.

d) Pressure be exerted collectively through UN agencies on demanding committment to goals and targets, i.e. political will from national governments?

e) A climate for literacy is created? Of course the role of the press and media is extremely important, and they must be harnessed. But it is more important in some way to capture the imagination of the ordinary people and to elicit their support by way of donations of some kind or other, or involvement in supportive local campaigns.

Arms expenditure reduction

f) There is a 1% reduction in expenditure globally on arms? Every government / state should make this commitment, and the money collected be used in the areas most effected or set apart for a specific aspect of the work on literacy.

g) We give primary recognition to the dictum that **no education is neutral** and therefore incorporate certain basic principles of political freedom and the right to speech and expression as fundamental to the success of a literacy campaign.

With women in mind — men need to be re-educated!

h) Follwong on from the above — and keeping in mind the high percentage of **women** among the world's illiterates — **It is not enough to** merely **run** special programmes for **women**. Without special input and hard sustained work with **men** the world over, especially through shop floors, trade unions, training establishments and all other suitable forums, there is no hope for female **literacy** or development! We are fighting an **ideological** battle on the very premise of how men view women and vice-versa, of how each views himself or herself, and their roles in society. Unless traditional **values** and attitudes are tackled directly and honestly, women will continue to be the mere 'objects' of development or literacy programmes, instead of active, free and willing partners and participants.

It is almost a must in the context of case studies concerning literacy campaigns to point out once more the excellent and detailed analysis of **The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade — Between Struggle and Hope** by Valerie Miller.
Published by:
Westview Press Inc., 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301, U.S.A.

In some of the last issues we referred to the reports and materials which have emerged from the annual Regional Workshop on the Preparation of Neo-Literate Materials in Asia and the Pacific. At the end of last year their Fifth World Workshop took place in India and resulted in the Final Report
Field Survey, Preparation and Field-Testing of Neo-Literate Materials.
It is distributed together with other information materials such as posters, a nutrition card game, an endless strip cartoon and a cassette drama/radio programme.
If you are interested, please write to the:
Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO, No. 6, Fukurumachi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 162 Japan.
Two other reports are available from the same address:

- **1988 Planning Meeting on Asian/Pacific Joint Production Programme of Materials for Neo-Literates in Rural Areas,** Tokyo, 25 - 28 February 1988
- **National Workshop on the Preparation of Literacy Follow-up Materials in China,** Fuzhou, 1 - 10. September 1987.

The Chinese National Association for Adult Education is starting to plan activities for the International Literacy Year 1990. Lei Heng-Min is Deputy Chairman of the Association. He presented this paper at the second meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy which met in Berlin in 1988. He also distributed the »Regulations on the Literacy Programme Issued by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 5 Feb. 1988«. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please write to the editor.
The Chinese version was translated into English by Mr Dai Rong-Guang.

Lei Heng-Min

Plans of the National Association for Adult Education in China for International Literacy Year 1990

China is one of the developing countries in the Third World and is still at the primary stage of socialism. Yet, China has made a great deal of progress at all levels of education, including literacy. Within less than 40 years, the illiteracy rate of China (excluding Taiwan

Province) has been reduced from more than 80% in the first few years of the founding of the People's Republic of China to 20% in 1987. In more practical terms, more than 150 million illiterates have become literate. In spite of such excellent achievements in literacy, China still has over 200 million illiterates in absolute figures.

In order to attain the literacy goal as set by the United Nations and UNESCO for the end of this century, China, in accordance with its practical conditions, has drawn up strategical plans for literacy. The fundamental principles of the strategical plans are to:

- adopt measures suited to local conditions and to deal with different areas or different literacy target groups in various ways;
- make overall plans for combining the literacy programme with the universalization of primary education. The literacy goal however can only be accomplished on the basis of popularizing primary education. The literacy goals set out in the strategical plans are the popularization of primary education in most parts of the country, the eradication of illiteracy among children and young adults from 1990 to 1995, and the eradication of youth and young adult illiteracy in all parts of the country by the year 2000.

There are 2065 counties in China, hence each county is seen as an individual unit with regard to plans for a literacy programme and the universalization of primary education. Just as the economic and cultural development differs from one county to another, the educational foundations also vary greatly. In accordance with the different rural conditions, the requirements for literacy plans are classified into the following three categories:

1. Those regions which are economically and culturally developed and several of those countries which are partially developed shall eradicate youth and young adult illiteracy prior to 1990;

2. Most of the counties in China with the exception of those which are very poor, shall eradicate youth and young adult illiteracy by the year 1995;

3. About 200 counties in which the economic and cultural conditions are terribly backward shall strive to end illiteracy among children and young adults by the end of this century. By the year 2000, China shall thus have eradicated illiteracy among youth and young adults.

At present, 1240 counties in China have already universalized primary education and fundamentally realized the goal of eradicating young adult illiteracy. The literacy rate in the 15-40 age group totals 85%. It is expected that several hundred more counties could reach the above targets in 1990, and those counties with 85% literacy rate are expected to increase the rate to 95%.

For those newly literate people, post-literacy education shall be developed in various ways to prevent them from becoming illiterate again. For the purpose of upholding their interest in learning and consolidating what they have learned, post-literacy education should by no means be limited to purely recognizing Chinese characters, but should also encourage the new literates to learn some vocational and practical skills.

To carry out the above strategic plans and prepare for the International Literacy Year, the National Association for Adult Education in China will further coordinate its activities with the State Education Commission and other organizations at home and abroad to accomplish the following:

1. To supply educational advice to the departments and organizations concerned.

2. To adopt various methods in mobilizing public opinion and propagating the significance of literacy so as to make people aware of illiteracy and the necessity of literacy education.

3. To give special concern to eradicating illiteracy among women, minority nationalities and in underdeveloped areas in close co-operation with women's organizations, youth organizations and relief bodies.

4. To increase theoretical research and studies on literacy and farmer (peasant) education. We believe that literacy work in the 1980s and beyond which comprises many new and distinctive features, differs greatly from what it used to be in the past. And that is also true for literacy teaching materials. Only when we become seriously engaged in studying the newly emerged problems in various situations and the experiences at home and abroad, can we adopt suitable policies and measures to meet the requirements of literacy in the years of reforming and opening China to the outside world.

5. To participate in the training of administrative personnel and teachers of literacy. The local people's governments have done tremendous work in this field at various levels and the NAAEC will continue to be involved in the training programmes.

The 2nd issue of the UNESCO bulletin **Prospects** is a special edition on **Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: Situation and Action**. Some of the contributions deal with functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries in general, others with particular problems in countries such as Hungary, F.R.G., France, U.K., Denmark or Poland.
If you are interested, please write to:
UNESCO, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

The German Adult Education Association has been cooperating with partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the areas of literacy and adult education for the last 20 years. In order to present some of its experiences and to describe potential programmes with partners in the near future, DVV was invited to make a contribution to the second meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy in Berlin 1988.

Dr. Heribert Hinzen is the Deputy Director of the Department for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association/DVV and editor of this journal.

Heribert Hinzen

Literacy, adult education, international cooperation: DVV in Africa, Asia and Latin America

Introduction

We shall give concise information at three levels:

- our framework of operation with regard to professionalism, solidarity, areas, partners, countries, funding, and the future;

- an example of our practical involvement in one country to better illustrate our approach;
- our understanding of the context of literacy work in relation to the literarization of cultures, adult education and development.

Professionalism

The backbone of DVV's international work — in Europe, the other industrialised countries, Africa, Asia and Latin America — is the role DVV is playing in adult education in Germany. To be very clear: DVV is principally a professional service institution for the support of adult education in Germany. DVV is a national body. It comprises the regional associations and thus represents the local centres and their interests at a national level. It covers their organisational and educational work; carries out research and documentation; struggles for better finance and legislation; defends adult education at a national level together with other adult education providers such as the churches, the trade unions and others. In order to meet the many challenges and ever increasing responsibilities, DVV has three departments (the Pedagogical Institute, the Media Institute, and the Department for International Cooperation) and several specialised units and committees. DVV is a non-governmental organisation with supportive recognition by the German Government.

Solidarity

DVV, therefore, is definitely not an international funding agency, although we readily respond to the call for international solidarity by supporting our partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our guidelines stress the point that support to adult education and development in Africa, Asia and Latin America must be related to a better satisfaction of the basic needs.

The international programmes, projects and activities of DVV are set in the broader context of adult education and development; most of them have a literacy component. Their scope in size and quality depends very much on the situation in the individual countries (socio-economic framework, language policy, revenue for education, literarization process etc.) and the orientation of our partners (approaches, methods, content of literacy work etc.)

Areas

The major areas in which DVV is involved with partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America are training (literacy tutors, community development and health workers, diploma students, etc.), production of teaching and learning materials (primers, handbooks, post-literacy booklets, posters, etc.), research and evaluation (baseline surveys, case studies, formative evaluations, etc.) and equipment (transport, printing, stationery, etc.).

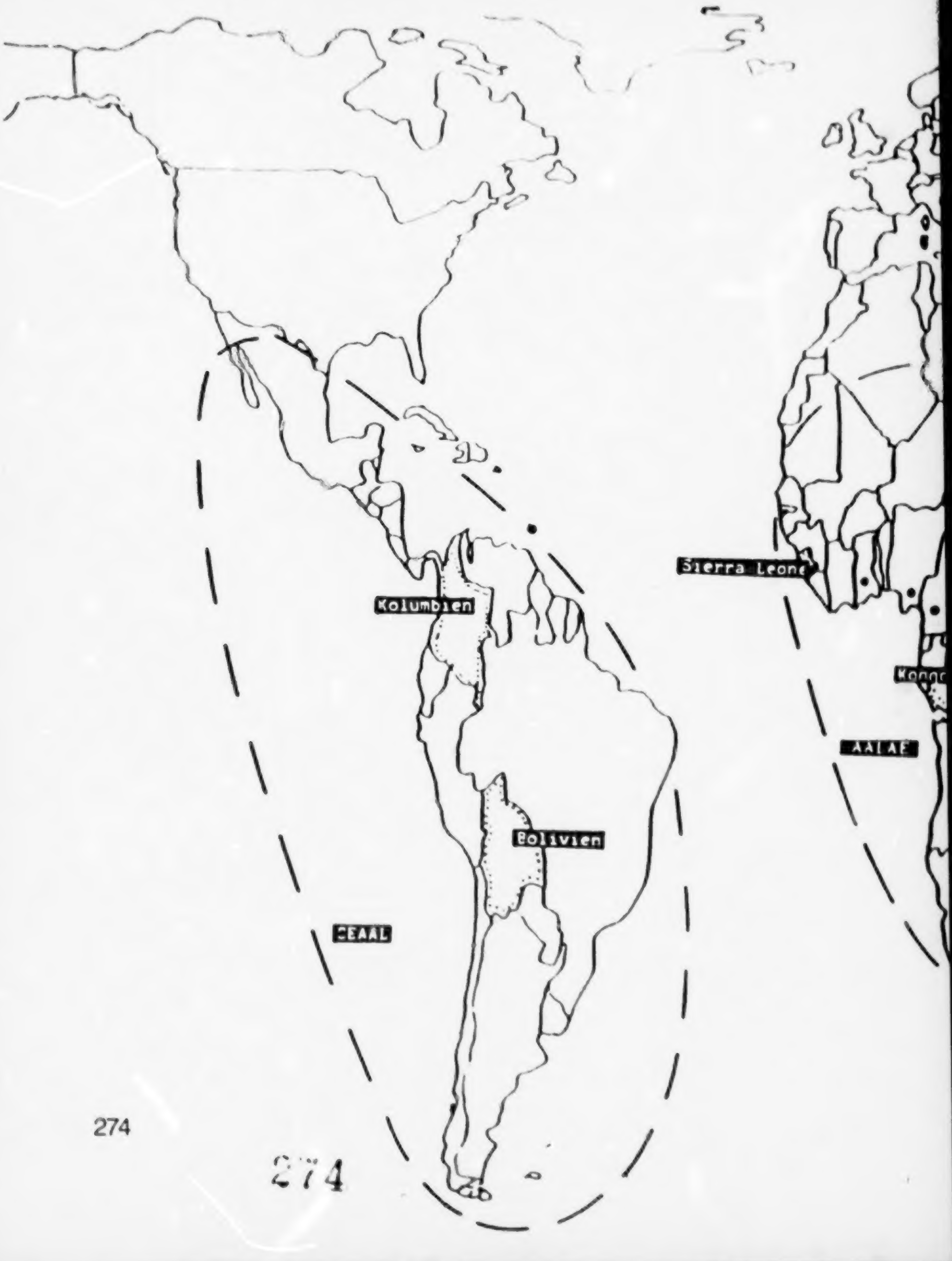
Partners

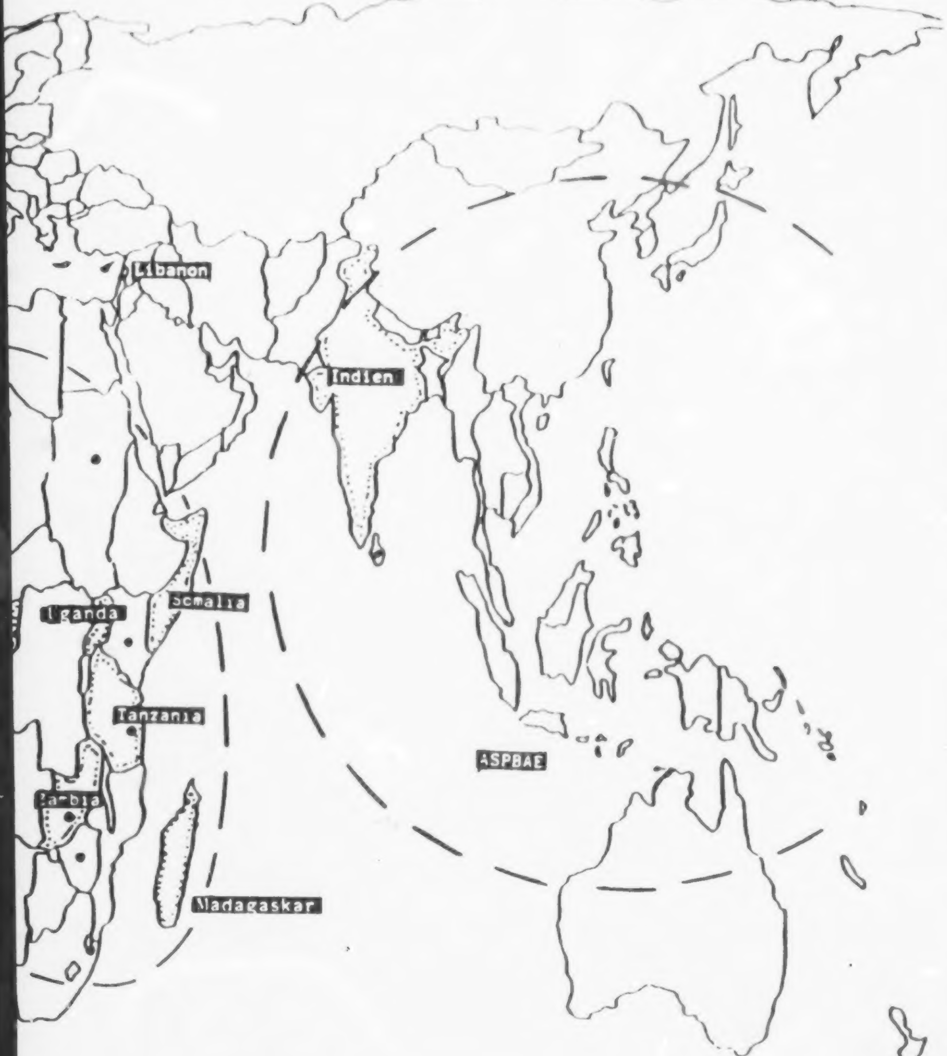
DVV cooperates with other national NGOs, government departments, parastatal institutions, universities, and regional organisations. A look at the current partnership project activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America shows the NGO sector slightly ahead in number.

There are currently three major approaches of operation for us:

- DVV opens a liaison office within a country and cooperates with adult education departments of government ministries, with adult education centres of the universities, national associations and local grass-roots organisations.
- DVV is attached to one organisation within a country and cooperates in joint ventures.

Appendix 1 Projects and support to partners of DVV in Africa, Asia and Latin America


Kolumbien
Bolivien
CEAAL
Sierra Leone
Kong
AALAE


Libanon
Indien
Somalia
Uganda
Tanzania
ASPBAE
Zambia
Madagaskar

● Scholarships to students of adult education

- DVV supports regional associations and networks in the above mentioned areas.

In about half of the projects we have a resident DVV-colleague working with our partners.

Countries

The number of countries in which we work differs according to the duration of projects and support to programmes. Appendix 1 shows the countries in which we are currently working and the locations to which the regional associations extend their services.

Funding

The year 1988 marks the 25th year of international cooperation since substantial funding was received from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and passed on by DVV to our partners. Appendix 2 shows that within the given period, we have supported adult education in Africa, Asia and Latin America up to the tune of about 100 million DM. The current yearly budget is close to 10 million DM. Most of the projects and country programmes have an annual budget between 300000 and 600000 DM. Current annual support to the regional associations and networks AALAE, ASPBAE, CEAAL, CARCAE, and PRIA amounts to more than 1.5 million DM.

As can be seen from our projected budget (Appendix 2) we can enter agreements with financial commitments to our partners for a period of three years as of 1988. This depends on the terms upon which our Federal Ministry of Finance plans and allocates the different ministries. The common understanding between our funding Ministry and DVV is based on a long-term involvement in Afria, Asia and Latin America.

DVV's perspective of professional cooperation in partnership and solidarity has resulted in a situation where most of our programmes have a duration of 10 to 15 years.

Example

To illustrate DVV's approach we have chosen cooperation with Sierra Leone as an example. After smaller forms of support and consultations with several partners in the country, DVV opened an independent liaison office in Freetown/Sierra Leone in 1981. DVV signed an agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone/Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which commissioned the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Sports/Adult Education Unit, the University of Sierra Leone/Institute of Adult Education and Extra Mural Studies, the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, and the People's Educational Association with the implementation of the planned adult education programme in the rural and urban regions of the country. Main areas of the cooperation should include training, development of teaching and learning materials, research and equipment.

Over the years, the following elements of the programme have been important — directly or indirectly — for the development of literacy work:

- negotiations on the part of the different partners and DVV with government to develop a national policy on adult education, including literacy;
- mobilising to request resources — financial and manpower — through the regular national budget for literacy;
- support to the National Literacy Committee, especially for the annual Literacy Day;

- publications to stimulate a dialogue for better and more literacy work;
- research into women and literacy, motivation for literacy in different cultural contexts, and evaluation of literacy programmes;
- development and printing of literacy primers with different levels and contents;
- research into traditional forms, contents, principles and institutional arrangements for education and their relevance today;
- collections of stories and songs, riddles and proverbs, their transcription, translation and publication;
- distribution of literacy stickers »Be ready for literacy«, stimulating providers and learners;
- compilation and distribution of a national directory on the providers of adult education and literacy;
- research into the informal sector of the economy and the social services which will identify training and education already provided and prepare for possible interventions in writing and arithmetic skills;
- advocating and lobbying for adult education and literacy through supplying written information and materials to all members of parliament;
- support to the training of adult educators at diploma level who will be involved in the planning and coordination of literacy work;
- training of literacy instructors;
- workshops and seminars to inform and mobilise traditional and political authorities at different levels: national, regional and chiefdom for literacy;
- consultations for inter-agency cooperation in literacy and adult education.

Dialogue on these different activities between the partners and networking in carrying out these activities has been a very important and prominent feature in the cooperation of our Sierra Leonean partners. Whereas NGOs operating at grassroots level carry out most of the literacy classes and related activities, they cooperate again and again with schools and teachers in the implementation of their programmes. The NGOs know that they need government backing and support and government knows that all the many smaller NGOs reach areas which government is unable to reach. The university, through the different departments of education, linguistics, and sociology has been instrumental in carrying out research related to literacy and the development of standardised orthographies and a national language policy.

Fortunately, DVV does not only bring into the partnership the full professional background of adult education work in Germany — of course without the intention of exporting and implanting these structures and contents in Sierra Leone — and its international experience, it also provides a budget for the different kinds of expenditure. Under the current financial constraints in Sierra Leone, we have to cope with a situation of having a larger programme budget than the Sierra Leonean partners have for adult education from within the country. However, it is advantageous for all partners to know the amount of »seed money« DVV can provide for a certain period. This gives the necessary room for concentrated planning of programmes and activities and for coordinated joint ventures by each of the partners.

It is a principle of DVV that it does not plan, nor implement, nor evaluate any programme in Sierra Leone without being in partnership with at least one of the four main partners. DVV's policy is not to take over or to walk alone, nor to develop something itself and then hand it over later. We have to work together right from the start!

Journal

The DVV journal »Adult Education and Development« will continue to address literacy — as we have done over the past 15 years.

The context and process of literacy is the major theme of this present volume. We have been looking for contributions on the theory and practice of literacy work as well as a critical re-thinking of past interventions through pilot projects, national campaigns, local initiatives or other approaches. This includes materials on practical experiences, methods, curriculum planning, and the challenges of post-literacy. Additionally we wished to look into findings of anthropological, linguistic, sociological, psychological and other research in their understanding of key issues related to orality and literality, literacy work in non-literate environments, culture, education and development. We see this edition as an invitation to reflect on issues surrounding literacy before and during the proposed International Literacy Year by organisations of the United Nations, national governments, local and international NGOs.

»Adult Education and Development« is published twice a year in English, French and Spanish. We produce about 15000 copies and more than 90% are distributed to readers in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Colleagues and partners initiate a lot of additional translation and publication; the special 1982 issue was published in more than 15 languages.

Context

To make more people literate, either through the school system or adult literacy, is difficult and only one part of the process which we might call the literarization of cultures. This includes the development from the dominance of oral speech to a prescribed language; it requires parallel or interrelated institutional and technological backings which go far beyond our educational interventions. Keywords in this respect are the standardization of language, its use in administration, paper production and printing. This evolutionary process usually does not take place within a period of years or decades but more or less over centuries.

Many problems faced in literacy and post-literacy work are related to a misunderstanding of this process in which our literacy activities play only a restricted role. Initiatives stressing the number of people which should be made literate in a certain time span underestimate the complexity of a process which eventually will create new systems of communication which are not immediately available and relevant for everybody in non-literate environments.

Many other education and training needs of the individual and the society — like income- and/or employment-oriented skills — are at least of equal importance in our understanding and practice of integrating literacy in an education system aimed at life-long learning. They too have to be fulfilled.

Outlook

DVV, as an adult education association, therefore will continue to do literacy work as part of other adult education measures linked to development activities. Our readiness for continuous professional solidarity and support was expressed in the statement »Cooperating or campaigning for literacy: Let's remove doubtful promises and cope with the practicable«. Since its publication five years ago, and following the many profound and encouraging reactions from partners and colleagues, DVV has supported adult education and literacy in Africa, Asia and Latin America to a larger degree than ever before.

We appreciate the fact that ICAE, in recent statements, emphasises its role and importance for the NGO sector more strongly as well as the creative and productive diversity of approaches for the development of literacy in different cultural, social and political contexts.

We welcome ICAE's attempt in the ITFL report »International Literacy Year: Beginning to act« to question the (war-like) language often used against non-literate people and illiteracy. Within Germany, DVV would never use phrases like »eradication« etc., and we will not use them in our international work.

Finally, DVV suggests to do away with the imposition of precisely defined time spans for our literacy work which are unrealistic; they hinder more than they tend to offer orientation.

Appendix 2

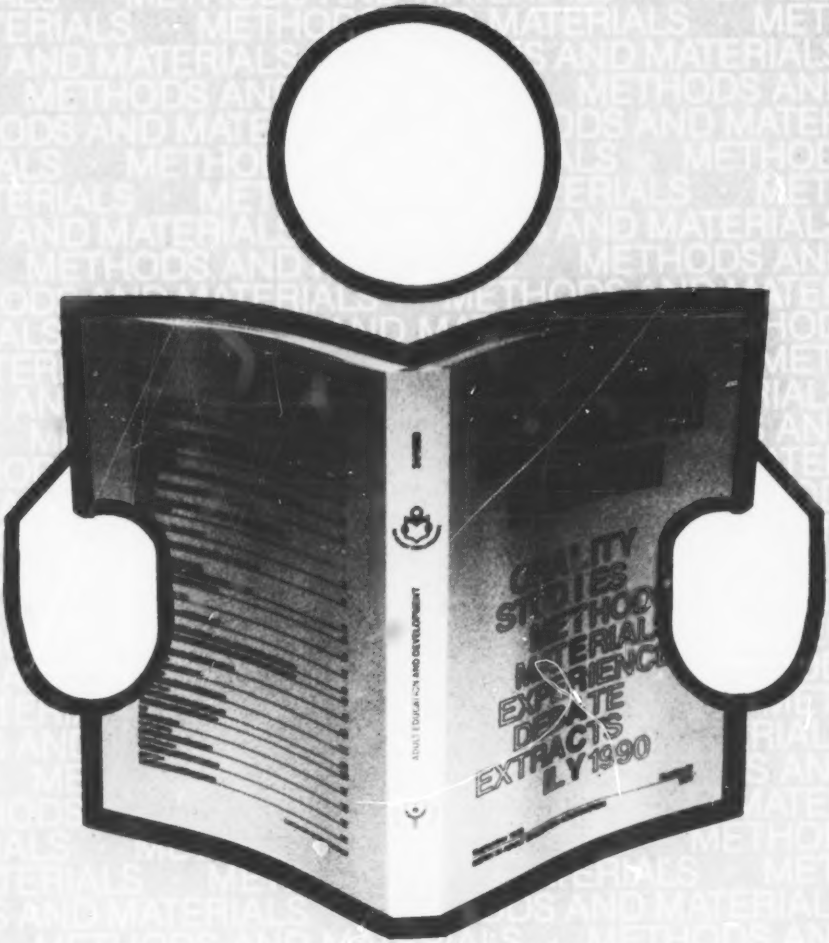
Funds for adult education in Africa, Asia and Latin America

year	*expended budget (DM)*
1963	236120
1964	718548
1965	1090993
1966	1327199
1967	1361458
1968	1361400
1969	1871760
1970	1881100
1971	1969600
1972	2379950
1973	2666890
1974	4427672
1975	3325200
1976	3488300
1977	4655300
1978	5717610
1979	5513000

year	*expended budget (DM)*
1980	6364000
1981	7603000
1982	7865000
1983	8161100
1984	8383000
1985	8410000
1986	8490000
1987	9650000
Total:	108873200

year	*projected budget (DM)*
1988	9000000
1989	9200000
1990	9500000

The projected budget does not include supplementary funds approved for the respective years.


ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
QUALITY
STUDIES
METHODS
MATERIALS
EXPERIENCE
DEBATE
EXTRACTS
ILY 1990

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Mbang Iphib-Nso

How to teach mathematics with Cameroonian games

Apparatus:

Twelve holes (12) can be dug in the ground or carved in wood.
96 pebbles or seeds of any kind can be used (usually plum seeds).

Players:

2, 3, 4 to a maximum of 12 players. The holes are divided up amongst the players. Sometimes a player may have more holes than the other players. It is usually the inexperienced players who are allowed to have more holes.

How to play:

One player starts by picking up 7 seeds from his hole or one of his holes if he has several. He drops one seed into each hole as he moves in an anti-clockwise direction (to the right). He stops when all the seeds have been dropped. The next player to the right picks up seeds from one of his holes and continues the same procedure as the first player. This continues until all the players have had a turn. Each player always starts from his own hole(s), or more commonly called his home(s).

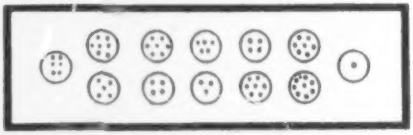
As the game progresses, some holes become very full of seeds. If a player decides to play from such a hole, it means he may go around the board several times. In this case, the starting hole should contain only two seeds… it means the player skips this hole several times.

How to win:

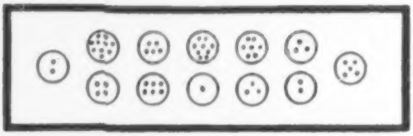
The player who picks up the greatest number of seeds is the winner.

How to pick up seeds:

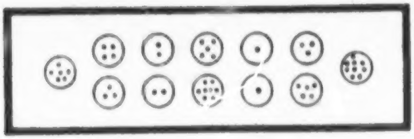
A player can only pick up seeds when it is his turn. He is able to pick up seeds on his last drop if the number of seeds in that hole is 2, or 4 or 6. He can also pick up seeds on either side of the finishing hole if they total 2, 4 or 6. See the illustrations below.



If a player ends here he only picks up the four (4) seeds from that hole.



What does he pick up here?



If a player ends on the hole with two (2), he picks that up, plus the holes on both sides

The game continues with each player making his drops and attempting to pick up seeds on his last drop. He can pick up seeds from his own hole **(home)** or any other player's **home.** The game continues until all the seeds are finished or there is only one seed in each hole. In this case, the »player who started the game picks these up« and adds them to what he has already won during the game.

How to score:

Each player groups his captured seeds into sets of 8... this constitutes **one home.** A player might have 3 groups of 8 and 6 left over. He is counted as one who has won **4 homes.** If he has 3 groups of 8 and 2 left over, he is counted as having **2 homes.**

The player with the highest number of homes is the winner. The game can be played until one player wins all 12 homes.

Techniques:

A player is allowed to count the number of seeds in his hole before playing. By doing this, he knows where the seeds will finish and he can predict whether or not he can capture some seeds or prevent others from capturing seeds. In this way also, he decides which of his holes **(homes)** he should start from.

It is usually wise to note what other players have so that you do not give them the chance to win some seeds. You do not let other players know that you are taking note of their holes **(homes)**.

Mathematical value of this game:

This is an excellent game to employ in your mathematical activities because it incorporates very important mathematical skills with an ancient and traditional game.

The mathematical skills are:
— decision making (very important)
— predicting
— counting
— using the four operations
— grouping into sets of 8 to represent one **home**
— probability.

There are so many more skills involved . . .
Can you discover any of these . . . let us know at IPAR.

This is an ancient and traditional game which is played in many different ways. Sometimes there are only 4 seeds in each hole, sometimes three, etc. **Get your children to invent new games and send the ideas along to us.**

M.J. Bakuza, S.T. Mahenge

A simple duplicating machine

How to construct a simple duplicating machine

I. To construct an improvised simple duplicating machine we need the following materials:
1. Pieces of wood and a large rigid piece of board
2. Four screw nailss
3. A minimum of four 1 1/2 nails. (More nails are needed to join together pieces of wood mentioned above.)
4. A piece of old blanket or felt
5. A minimum of four rubber bands
6. Four paper clips.

II. Construction

The simple duplicating machine is composed of three major parts. These parts are constructed separately and subsequently joined together to make a complete machine. They are:

i) A rigid base-board (The basis of the machine)
ii) A roller
iii) A piece of blanket

A. How to construct the base board

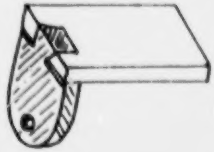
1. Cut a rigid piece of board measuring about 50cm by 25cm with a thickness of between 1 1/2-2cm. Plane the board smoothly. (The above measurements refer to a finished board.)

2. Screw in four round-headed screw nails at the end of the board lengthways so that they occupy the main holes at the head of a stencil. Leave them projecting for about 3/4 or 1 cm.

B. How to construct a roller

1. Plane smoothly a round piece of wood to make a cylindrical object with radius betwen 2 and 2 1/2cm and a length of 24 centimetres.

2. Plane smoothly a piece of wood and cut it into three pieces such that one is 26cm long and the other two measure between 10 - 12cm length respectively. One end of each of the two pieces should be made to a semi-circular shape while on the other end a joint is made to fit the two pieces to the former. Join the pieces to make a roller holder (see diagram).



3. Join No. 1 with No. 2 above so that No. 1 moves freely. 2 nails through the holes keep the roller held to the pieces, and facilitate its movements. A piece of wood is fixed in the middle of the roller holder. This is the handle of the roller.

C. How to prepare a blanket

1. Cut a piece of blanket measuring 45cm by 25cm.

2. Make four holes on the side of the blanket lengthways located such that the heads of the screws are allowed to pass through.

3. Make other small holes corresponding with the small nails.

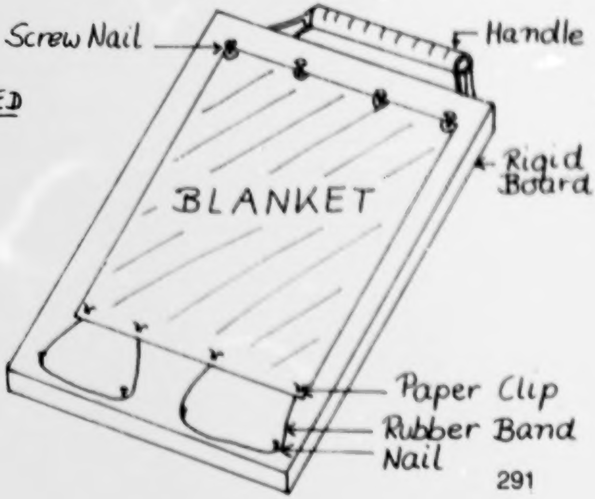
4. Straighten four paper clips and bend them to look as shape. Slip one rubber band over two bent wires.

D. How to assemble

1. Place the piece of blanket (prepared in C above) on the base board (A) such that its holes (in C. 2) pass over the heads of the screws.

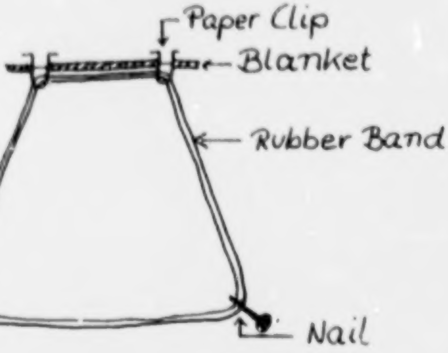
2. Insert the bent wires (as in C. 4) through the holes of the blanket (C. 3) and loop the rubber bands round the nails so that the blanket is stretched and held firmly along the base board. (Note that one rubber band slips through two adjacent clips and tightly looped over two corresponding nails.) (See diagrams)

A. ASSEMBLED MACHINE



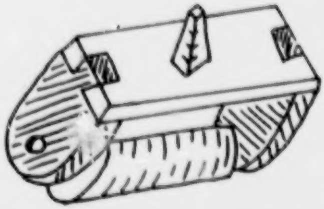
E. A handle

Though a handle may make a part of the machine, the duplicator may do without it. Its function is to help one to hold the board when moving it from one place to another. A wooden handle with rubber can be fixed on the upper side of the board.



2. RUBBER-BAND FIXED

(The side on which are the screw nails.) Otherwise an iron rod is bent in the form of a handle of a tin container and fixed on the board to serve as a handle.



3. A ROLLER ASSEMBLED

III. A duplication machine in action

1. Spread enough ordinary duplicating ink to soak the blanket.

2. Place an ordinary stencil over the blanket such that

   (a) the heads of the screws pass through the main holes of the stencil;
   (b) the side on which the letters can be read clearly is directly placed on the blanket.

3. Place a duplicating paper over the stencil.

4. With a roller press and roll it over the paper such that the writings on the stencil are transferred to the paper. Remove the paper and put another one. Do the process repeatedly until you have the equal number of copies as you need. If you have more than one stencil remove the first and place another repeating the second step above. (See diagrams)

नयाँ गोरेटो
पहिलो पाइलो

सहयोगी पुस्तक

In reply to our invitation to contribute material on literacy for this special issue, we received several papers from Nepal. This is a shortened version of »Linking Small-scale Literacy Projects to National Programs: A Case Study from Nepal«.
For a full copy, please write to World Education, 210 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111, U.S.A.

Chij K. Shrestha / John P. Comings / David W. Kahler

Linking small-scale literacy projects to national programmes: A case study from Nepal

Until recently, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have not played an active role in the development of national literacy policies or programmes in Third World countries. NGO programmes have tended to be more flexible, more innovative and more responsive to the needs of particular communities than government efforts have been. National governments, however, are able to command greater resources and reach a wider audience than NGOs. The importance of translating the lessons learned from successful small-scale NGO projects to the national level has led to closer alliances between NGOs and government agencies. The Nepal National Literacy Programme is a valuable example of how the strengths of the Ministry of Education were combined with those of World Education and other non-governmental organisations to produce an effective, large-scale national literacy effort.

In Nepal the government acknowledged its limitations and accepted the contributions of World Education in strengthening its adult education programme. World Education and other NGOs benefitted from the government's efforts because materials and methods that proved successful in pilot projects were made available to all organisations through the government at low cost. For the first time, many NGOs could offer high quality literacy training as part of their development programmes.

Methodology and materials used

The approach to literacy in the Nepal National Literacy Programme is adapted from the method developed by Paulo Freire in Brazil and elsewhere, which combines the acquisition of literacy skills with the development of what he refers to as »critical consciousness«.

The elements of literacy are taught through a minimal core vocabulary of key words. These are words that are not only important to learners, but which are charged with emotional content and capable of stimulating discussion that can awaken critical consciousness. The key words used include all the letters and basic sounds of the language. The keyword approach used by the Nepal Literacy Programme is eclectic in that it uses a method that is both analytic and synthetic. The key word is analysed, or broken into syllables. The syllables are then used to synthesize new words.

Materials

To date, the programme has produced a set of four 96-page primers, a range of supplementary materials, and teacher and facilitator guides. Each learner receives a complete set of the four books, a workbook and a pencil. Each class is provided with a set of supplementary materials for use in group exercises. Teachers are provided with a manual that explains the instructional methods used in the four books, the supplementary materials and lesson plans for each day of classes.

The first book starts with simple words and letters and progresses to complete stories and informational pieces. At the end of the first book, learners have progressed far enough to read and write simple stories and do basic maths. All of the letters, punctuation, and sound combinations in the language and all mathematical functions are not covered until the end of the fourth book. This slow unfolding of the written language and arithmetic allows learners to acquire and practice using skills at a measured pace.

Key words

The text of the first lesson discusses types of work. After the discussion has ended, the instructor presents the key word for that lesson, in this case काम »work«. Nepali is written using the Devenagri script, the same script used for Sanskrit, Hindi and many northern Indian languages. The script uses consonants combined with vowel signs and vowels that stand alone. The system is phonetic in that each letter or letter combination has only one sound.

A set of letter cards is used for the first five lessons to help learners practice new skills. The consonant-vowel combinations needed for the key words are included in the set. When presenting a key word the instructor first presents the word using the syllable cards. The teacher pronounces the word, and then asks the learners to repeat it. The teacher then breaks the key word into syllables (in the case of »work« there are two), and pronounces each. The learners are then asked to repeat the syllables. The instructor adds the two syllable cards that represent other combinations of consonant and vowel signs that have been presented. As there are two consonants and two vowels in the first lesson, there are four combinations. The instructor pronounces all of the combinations with the group doing the same. Learners are asked to suggest other words that could be made with the same syllables.

The size of the print used in the primers is large and the space provided for writing exercises is ample. This aids understanding by people with poor eyesight and those unfamiliar with letters; it also allows learners to practice writing without being constrained by a small space.

Supplementary materials

Each class is given a set of supplementary materials for use in learning activities associated with exercises in the primers. These materials consist of a set of posters (40cm by 73cm) strung together with string like a calendar with illustrations on both sides so that they can be hung on the wall. Each illustration is an enlargement of the key word pictures. In addition, each class receives three sheets of heavy paper with syllables printed on them. The sheets are of three sizes and are used in games and other activities in support of the primers.

One sheet contains the syllable cards mentioned earlier. The syllable cards are used for making »discovery charts« for the first five lessons. The discovery chart begins with only the four syllables shown in Lesson One. By Lesson Four, a total of 35 cards are in the chart. With 35 cards, several hundred two- and three-syllable words can be made. Each of these large (6cm × 3cm) syllables are cut out to form individual cards. A hole can be punched in the top of each card so that the cards can be hung on nails which are provided by the project and which can easily be driven into the mud walls of the classroom.

The discovery chart can be used by the teacher to show each key word and explain its component syllables, or it can be used to play simple learning games. To make the discovery chart the syllable cards are hung in rows on the wall on nails placed so that the cards hang separately. Next to the chart is a work area with several rows of three nails each. In this way cards can be taken from the discovery chart and placed on nails in the work area to make two and three syllable words. After a word has been made the cards can be returned to the discovery chart.

Games

In the Nepal Literacy Programme, games have proven to be a good way to practice recognising and using the letters. Games involve excitement, cooperation, competition and fun, and provide a good means for the participants to learn among themselves and at their own pace. The role of the facilitator is to make sure the rules of the game are understood and that everyone has a chance to participate. The facilitator and the participants are free to modify the games, to make up variations and even to invent new games. Three games which are introduced early in the first cycle of classes are described below.

The first game, **Challenge**, is introduced on the third day and is designed to help the participants learn new syllables. To play the game the class is divided into two equal groups. The facilitator picks one learner from each group who is able to read the chart as the team leader. Each team leader is given five minutes to drill his team on the syllables. Then, one of the learners is asked to keep score on the blackboard or on a piece of paper. The game begins with one of the leaders pointing to a syllable card. He calls on a member of the opposite team and »challenges« him to read it correctly. If the answer is correct, the participant at the blackboard tallies one point for that team. If the answer is incorrect the team does not get a point. Now the other team leader points to a different syllable and »challenges« a member of the opposite team to read it. Team leaders must challenge each and every member of the opposite team once. After all have had a turn, the scorekeeper announces the winning team.

Match letters is played for the first time on the fourth day. The purpose of the game is to help the participants recognise and name the syllables introduced in Lesson Two. This game is played with smaller syllable cards taken from one of the sheets provided to each class. The paper contains four sets of 24 cards. In this way the class of 30 learners can be broken into four groups of 7 or 8. After the learners have formed their small groups, each group is given a set of the cards and the facilitator explains the game. The 24 cards are spread out, facedown, on a flat surface. The first player turns over two cards, one at a time. As he turns over each card he reads it to the group. If the participant fails to read either syllable, or reads either one incorrectly, he loses his turn. If the two cards are the same, the participant keeps them. If not, he turns them back face down in the same place he found them. Play continues until all cards are taken. Players count their cards and announce to the group how many they have. The player with the most cards wins.

The purpose of each of the games used in the programme is to give participants practice in recognizing and using the written symbols in ways that are fun and non-threatening. Games are a form of practice in that simple skills of recognition and pronounciation are used over and over again. Games also discourage rote memorization because there is spontaneity and excitement that comes from being involved in a game. At the same time, practice builds confidence in recognizing and remembering letters recently learned.

Stories

Research conducted in Nepal before the current project began indicated that rural illiterate Nepalis could identify people and objects depicted in simple shaded drawings but that they had difficulty interpreting action and stories. In the light of these findings, the primers include practice in reading illustrated stories that follow a western comic book format. These skills are introduced first in Lesson Two. The class is divided into small groups of three to five participants as for a poster discussion. Groups are asked to discuss the story depicted in the series of illustrations. Each group selects one member to summarize the group's understanding of the comic and present it to the larger group. After each group's spokesperson has presented the group's ideas, the facilitator raises points that might not have been mentioned in the group reports.

Three sessions later the group turns its attention to the comic story again. The class is again divided into small groups. The participants look at the comic and are asked to think about what the character might be saying in each of the pictures. Each group selects four members to role-play the story, who in turn enact the scenes using the dialogue they have created to go with the pictures.

In Lesson Three a dialogue between two characters is introduced. In the dialogue, the two characters are represented on either side of the words. The facilitator has individual participants read the lines from the dialogue. The facilitator questions the participants about the dialogue focusing on an understanding of the action between the two characters.

Halfway through the first book, a full, multi-page story is presented in illustrated story format. This story is about a man who drinks, gambles and treats his wife badly. He spends the money his wife has earned and saved and gets in a fight with her. She leaves him and returns to her family. He follows and asks her forgiveness. The story ends with the wife trying to decide whether or not to believe him. The class is asked to discuss what they think she should do. To finish the story, the learner must go on to Book Two. Each of the remaining books has elaborate dramatic stories in comic format that are serialised between two books, thus adding to the learners' motivation to continue with the classes.

Development content

In addition to basic literacy and numeracy skills, a full range of development topics are covered in the first four books. This information comes up in group discussions in the first two books and is dealt with in a general way in the stories that provide reading practice and in the maths problems that provide numeracy practice. In the third and fourth books, direct instructional articles are presented on topics related to health, sanitation and maternal and child health.

There is no pretense that the four books make up complete instructional materials on these topics. The books provide an opportunity for these subjects to be raised, discussed and a few important facts are presented. To be skilled in any of these subjects however the reader would need further instruction. The goal of these materials is to raise the issues and provide enough information so that the reader will be motivated to seek further help.

Mr. Kumar is a lecturer at the Government College of Education, Srinagar, Kashmir.
This article presents an experience from a Northern state in India, Kashmir. Mr. Kumar was involved in this work before undertaking further studies at the Department of Continuing Education at the University of Warwick in England.
This is a shortened version of his manuscript; a full copy is available from the editor.

M.R. Kumar

Name-based approach to teaching adults

Although the history of adult education in India is very old and has continued to exist in one or the other form, the present 'National Adult Education Programme' (NAEP) is the most comprehensive and well thought-out programme. It is not merely an educational programme but a development-oriented programme as well. Its main purpose is to bring the deprived and left-out masses to the centre of development activity rather than allowing them to continue to exist on its fringe which results in their being deprived of the fruits of development.

However all efforts to bring the adults into the Adult Education Centre (AEC) have to a large extent failed, despite thorough planning and preparation.

The question — »What am I going to gain by attending an AEC for an hour or two?« — seemed to be quite genuine and alarming because in a state like Jammu and Kashmir (which has very meagre economic resources) spending two hours in an AEC sitting idle would mean non-particpation in an economic activity which would otherwise yield some income and thus help in raising one's standard of living. The fact doesn't need to be over-emphasized that even in the off-season and in very adverse climatic conditions both male and female adults, in urban as well as in rural areas of the state, engage in various types of handicraft and income-generating activities which can be carried out indoors. So getting them out of their homes and asking them to attend an AEC for an hour or so was a real problem.

After a series of deliberations regarding various training programmes and workshops, alternatives for motivating the adults were thought out and put into practice. One of these was 'The Name-Based Approach'.

What it is: — It is a matter of common observation that the learners attend the AEC for a few days at the beginning just out of curiosity and then, after this 'experiment' with literacy, suddenly stop coming. An idea was therefore floated by Professor S. Bhushan — the then Commissioner of Education in Jammu & Kashmir state — that if the adults could learn to read and write their names and parentages, it would help to maintain their motivation and thereby ensure their continued participation in the programme. Enabling the learner to read his name and sign (or simply write his name) against it would save him from being exploited or deceived at the time of receiving wages — up until now he had used thumb impressions on the muster rolls which could be done by anybody (even the payer himself) on his behalf. Similarly, he could prevent himself from being deceived (at the time of doing some monetary transaction in day-to-day life with others concerned) by developing a workable knowledge of arithmetic, i.e. making simple calculations based on the four fundamental rules. They should be made to understand that exploitation has its roots in ignorance which in itself is a result of illiteracy. The idea was quite sound and therefore acceptable to the field functionaries. They readily agreed to it and started practising it in the field.

How it works: — Once the formal admission and registration of the specified learner is completed, (which takes a few days during which the learners are kept busy in various types of recreational activity) they are gradually introduced to the teaching-learning process.

To start with, they are encouraged to utter their names one by one. These names are put down on the blackboard by the animator.

The names are then taken up individually according to their simplicity for study and analysis (i.e. names which are written in a simple form are taken up first followed by the complex ones).

For example: names like *Ghulam Ahmed, Ghulam Rasool* (in Urdu) will be taken up first and those like *Ghulam Muhammad, Abd-ul-Ahad, Assad-Ulla*, etc. will be taken up later, as they contain composite letters such as *'ul'* (which has been taken from the Arabic and stands for the article *'the')* or double sounding letters like *'mm'* (in *Muhammad).*

Steps in teaching: — The following steps are involved:
1. Encouraging every learner to speak out his/her name.
2. Writing the names (by the instructor) on the blackboard in a complete form.
3. Taking one particular name (or even two simple ones) on one day.

4. Analysing the name(s) into syllables and letters with the help of the learners.
5. Helping the learners to identify and note down the key letters.
6. . eaching them incomplete forms of these letters (when written separately) and then the complete forms (when written in combination with other letters).
7. Giving two-lettered, three-lettered and four-lettered forms of words made from these letters.
8. Providing related exercises for practising at the centre and at home.
9. Introducing the number digits informally on the basis of the »number of letters learnt on a particular day«.

After teaching the simpler names, complex and composite ones are taken up and taught in a similar manner until the names of all the learners are taught. In a class of 20 to 30 learners teaching and analysing the names of all the participants introduces them to almost all the letters of the Urdu alphabet.

As teaching-learning progresses, the learners become more and more motivated so that **parentages** and **addresses** of the learners can also be taught within a period of 35 – 40 working hours (approximately 9 – hours/week).

Learners can also be taught all the number digits and counting from one to hundred, and also be introduced to the arithmetical signs and to simple questions on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Learners could also be taught bus numbers and their destinations in the same period of time.

Since all this and the like engages the interest of adult learners, it enhances their motivation and leads to the development of better reading and writing skills.

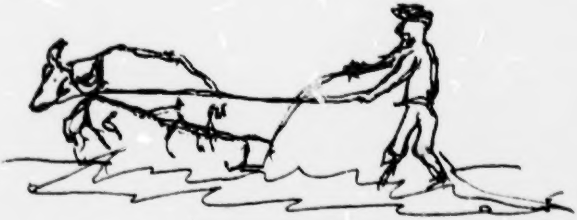
An interesting experience is described by Flaviano B. Francisco, Kidapawan, North Cotabato, Republic of the Philippines.

Flaviano B. Francisco

SISOMATEC: A method of teaching adults

SISOMATEC is a method of teaching that answers the learning needs of adults who, by their unique nature, do not readily respond to the methods used with children in the formal school system. It is based on the realization that adults who are beginning to become functionally literate are already equipped with useful knowledge and skills which they are successfully using in their daily life. It has some of the characteristics of the Cartelia, Freire and Global methods compressed in a package that focuses on the **SI**tuation and the **So**cial, **MA**thematical and **TEC**hnological life of the learner. As in the other methods, SISOMATEC makes extensive use of pictures and other forms of visual aids to facilitate teaching-learning activities.

In the first lesson the SItuation is taken up. The first half of the class period is devoted to a functional discussion of the current issues, conditions and situation on the local, national and even international scenes. This discussion is carried on by the participants after the facilitator has motivated them on the topic. The visual material, usually a picture or a poster, shows a current condition and is provided with a lead sentence. Ideas, comments and opinions are generated as the participants discuss the lead sentence rather than talk about the picture. The picture below illustrates this step of the SISOMATEC method.



»He, too, is a hero«

While the picture shows a farmer at work, the lead sentence 'He, too, is a hero' is chosen.

On the second day, the SOcial aspect of the lesson is taken up. Picking up from the SItuation, the facilitator leads the discussion on the effects of farming on social life. Using the same picture employed in the first presentation, she guides the participants in talking about the farmer and how farming affects society in general and the community in particular. The questions suggested below will prove useful in starting the discussion:

— How do farmers help improve the community?
— What may happen if farmers stop working? Why?
— How does farming contribute to social development?
— How can we encourage youth to take up farming as a profession?
— How can non-farmers show appreciation for the farmer?
— What has the government done to help the farmers?

- — How can farming foster international and global understanding?
- — etc. ... etc.

The participants take over the discussion from the facilitator by asking each other questions.

On the third day, the MAthematical aspect of the lesson is taken up. Using the same picture and recalling the discussions of the first and second days, the facilitator introduces mathematical concepts and ideas. He may do this by presenting problems that are within the experiences of the participants, thereby making them aware that mathematics is a part of their daily activities. An example of a typical farm-related problem is given below.

> *»One farmer produced 50 sacks of rice from his farm last year. This year he produced 75 sacks. How many more sacks did he produce this year?«*

The problem may vary in difficulty depending on the degree of skills the class has. If the class is advanced, two or three stage problems may be given. Other problems using fractions, accounting, measurements, etc. may be presented. More complicated problems may be introduced later.

On the fourth day the TEChnological aspect is taken up. After a review of the discussion held during the first three lessons, the facilitator guides the participants in talking about the factors which help to increase farm production and income. They may be led to discuss the effects of the modern practices of farming, fertilizers, irrigation, use of machinery, and composting. Other topics of interest such as crop insurance, cooperatives, warehousing, etc. may be introduced.

In all the four aspects of the lesson, the following steps are observed:

1. Motivation
2. Presentation
3. Assimilation
4. Application
5. Follow-up.

The second half of the class period in all of the four aspects is devoted to the development of listening, reading and writing skills. Stories of great men, modern farm practices, nutrition education, food preservation, etc. may be read to the class by the facilitator. If the participants have already acquired functional reading and writing skills they may be asked to read the stories by themselves. Another activity is writing short paragraphs on such topics as

— Why the farmer is a hero
— How to increase farm production
— Farming as a profession etc.

This will develop the ability of putting ideas, observations and opinions into writing. In mathematics, reading and writing numbers are developed.

While it was observed that the SISOMATEC method is most effective when used in a class that has already acquired functional reading and writing skills, it can be equally used with success in beginners' literacy classes by simplifying the reading and writing phases. The facilitator may introduce the lesson using either the Cartelia, Freire, Global, or any other method, or a combination of methods, which she thinks suits her particular class.

— Freire method is indicated in the choice of a lead sentence for discussion and isolating the word that expresses the current situation.

— Global method is indicated in the study of the sentence as a whole then breaking it down into words, syllables and finally the letters that form the syllable.

— Cartelia method is indicated in the reading and writing of syllables to form words (he-ro).

The **Literacy Communicator** is a newsletter by the *Ohio Literacy Network, Columbus Literacy Council, 1200 W. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43222, U.S.A.* The fall edition 1987 carries two abbreviations related to literacy:

- PLAN: Push Literacy Action Now
- POWER: Providing Opportunities in Writing, Education and Reading.

Who else has interesting abbreviations related to literacy? Please write to us using the address of DVV on the inside front cover.

The following are 3 publications of the **International Reading Association**, which might be of relevance for those involved in literacy work:

- **How to prepare materials for new literates** is a very practical sourcebook and might be of particular interest for new readers, editors or publishers. Chapters 1 and 2 explain the needs and requirements of newly literate people while Chapter 3 focusses on the technical aspect of turning ideas into print, with special reference to problems of the production process. The last chapter demonstrates how to determine the success of the new materials.
- **Journal of Reading**, No. 7, April 1988 — Guest-edited issue on **»Adult Literacy«**
- **Catalogue of Publications 1988.**

If you are interested in any of these publications, please write to:
International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware 19714, U.S.A.

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This article is a reprint from a new journal »Literacy Voices«, 1/1988, published by the Nigerian Baptist Convention. If you are interested in further copies, please write to the editor at the following address:
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Dipo Fagunwa / Laperi Latona

An adventure into the teaching of rudimentary economics to adult literacy students

Abstract

This paper is a report of an experiment conducted at Ile-Ife on how adult learners can be taught rudimentary economics to improve their businesses.

It reports on an experiment carried out over a period of five weeks with two groups of adult learners at the rate of two lectures a week (making ten lectures in all for each group). Students were literacy

students and came from diverse backgrounds, both in social status and business.

Topics taught dealt with very simple economic theories of demand, supply, sole trade organisation, partnership and co-operative societies. At the end of the exercise it was discovered that adult learners gained from the experience and wished it to continue. It was also observed that there may be a need to diversify a little from the basic literacy courses to increase interest in such programmes.

This research was for us an exciting adventure. Motivation was perhaps the peruvian experiment of conscientization of *fotomontaje* — all of sudden we found a student of economics and a teacher of adult education working out modalities for evading basic literacy for some time by adding economics to it, making it work all the way as functional literacy. Faconey Ly of Mali suddenly started ramming it into our brains repeatedly what functional literacy does to people. He said that:

> *»It is intensive since it teaches the illiterate farmers not only to read and write accounts but above all enables them to manage their own affairs, to increase their productivity and to improve their vocational skills.«*

This made us more committed and we started looking for people, our own people who had not gone through the rigours of formal schools but who could read and write. We wanted those beneficiaries of basic literacy not only to read and write and compute simple arithmetic but also to apply economics to major knowledge anew. We also imagined ourselves in the nineteenth century taking coffee with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, agreeing with them that men are economic thinking only in terms of scarcity and choice but disagreeing at different points in time about their historical predictions of material dialects which ends in a state of nature where all are equal and economies share the global cake each to his due. Then, Nigeria's economy smiled at us while dictating that succour to each home is not to be found in a mass of people who are masters at writing letters and constant users of erasers but men and women who not only know that two tubers of yam and another two make four but constantly ask themselves »for how many people?«; »at what time?«; »at what ratio?«; »how can we get more?«. Men and women who would have a better understanding of these invisible yet concrete forces constantly shaping their lives.

This was going to be a case of teaching old dogs new tricks; trying out dentures on toothless bulldogs hence we were faced with immediate problems.

Problem I: Who are going to be our subjects and where shall we find them?
Problem II: When shall we teach them?
Problem III: What shall we teach them, in what language and how shall we teach them?
Problem IV: How shall we evaluate them?

Our first problem was solved with the aid of the Oranmiyan Local Government Community Development Unit where Mr. Eluyefa, the Community Development Officer, quickly furnished us with the names of all centres in the local government area and wished us well in our adventure. We selected two of these centres basing our judgement on the spatial and temporal convenience of getting to them.

Our second problem was solved at the centres. The centres met three times a week. Unfortunately they all met at the same time notably on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between the hours of 11 a.m. and 12 noon. We therefore resolved to take the first group courses in rudimentary economics for a period of five weeks. We went to the centres and obtained permission from the heads of classes who are primary school teachers in the locale to do this.

We then sat down to plan what should be taught, how and in what langauge it should be done. We had no option but to teach the adult students in the Yoruba language since basic literature is being introduced to them in the same language. The economics education student among us then drew up a list of topics to be taught and we discussed lessons.

We planned the following lessons for the five-wek period:

1st week: Demand — meaning types of demand, the determinants of demand and exceptions to the laws of demand.

2nd week: Supply — meaning, types of supply, factors affecting supply and exceptional cases to the laws of supply.

3rd week: Sole trade organisation — definition, advantages and disadvantages.

4th week: Partnership organisation — definition, advantages and disadvantages.

5th week: Co-operative society — meaning, advantages and disadvantages.

We knew without being told that we would have problems in teaching these topics as it would be difficult to find Yoruba equivalents for some of the terms. We then sought help from some Yoruba scholars and we were advised to use descriptive terms in such cases. We particularly experienced problems in defining demand as opposed to desire. Demand is the ability and willingness to buy certain commodities at a certain price over a period of time while desire is the wish to have certain commodities over a period of time.

We then decided on the teaching technique. We finally ended up selecting two — the lecture method and group discussion method.

The teacher was to introduce each class with the definition of terms and contrast these terms with allied or similar terms. The class is then thrown open and students are to discuss these terms while the teacher guides them and throws light on difficult areas where necessary.

The final problem we considered was the issue of evaluation. We knew that we must assess first and foremost with in-built assessment models within the classroom situation hence we planned to evaluate by observation. We were to observe participantly and non-participantly. As participant observers we were to observe the following:

(i) number of adults in attendance and class stability which is concerned with the geometric progression of class attendance which shows whether the latter is depreciating or appreciating.

(ii) participation of adults in classes which is to show us whether the teaching/learning situation is compelled to be teacher-centred or diffuse enough for adult students to participate actively. Our assumption here is that active participation by adult students is a pointer on how easily the students compelled the topic of discussion.

(iii) punctuality.

As non-participant observers we were to be concerned with noticeable behavioural changes after each class. Our assumption is that newly observed behavioural patterns are attributable to the lessons received in class.

Third, we were to evaluate through interviews and we planned to interview at least two adult students at the end of each topic (one from each group).

Our first adventure started on Monday January 20, 1986 at 11 a.m. Although there were 45 names on the register we met only 28 adult students of varying age with a modal age of 43 years. The major topic for the first two weeks was »Elementary Price Theory«. The major teaching aids were food items, posters, clothing items and many other samples; our objective was to make adults understand what is meant by demand for a commodity and what the exceptions to the laws of demand are.

The teacher then lectured on demand, mentioned and described such types of demand as derived demand, joint demand and substitute demand. Derived demand was described as that experienced when the demand for one good is the result of the demand for another. For example, the demand for wood is derived from the demand for chairs, tables etc. Joint demand was explained as that experienced when two or more groups of items are required e.g. the demand for chalk, chalkboard and dusters. Substitute demand is that in which the demand for one commodity is a result of the decrease or fall in the demand for another commodity which has the same uses e.g. demand for palm-oil may be a substitute demand for groundnut or vegetable oil or vice versa.

The students were then brought into contact with the reality of the law of demand that the higher the price, the lower the quantity that will be demanded. A class discussion was then started and together we arrived at the exceptions to the laws of demand which are

(a) Future rise in prices i.e. if there is a feeling that prices will rise in the future, people may buy larger quantities at higher prices.

(b) Goods of conspicuous consumption e.g. jewellery and fashion materials in vogue.

(c) Antiques and rare commodities under auction.

Evaluation followed with questions about demand and the students did well. We nevertheless had problems, especially with on-the-spot transaction of economic terms but with attempts at descriptions we were happily surprised when we found our students helping us out.

Our second class was on Wednesday, 22 January, 1986. We started the business of the day with a review of the last class and we were happy to see our students unfolding in the dialogue that ensued, both the natured and nurtured elements of demand. We were convinced of the students' progress in knowing all the factors affecting demand.

Our third class was on Monday, 27th January, 1986. We dealt with »supply«; our objective for the day was to make the adults understand what is meant by supply and to describe to them the many types of supply that exist.

After a review of the last class, the teacher explained the term supply to them as the amount of goods and services which are offered for sale at a given price per unit of time. She explained to them two types of supply: (a) Joint supply which involves commodities produced together and where changes in the supply of one automatically affects the other. An example of beef and cow hide (referred to locally as *»eran malu«* and *»ponmo«)* was given to them whereby changes in the supply of beef also meant geometric changes in the supply of cow hide. (b) Substitute supply in which case the increase in the supply of one commodity results in a decrease in the supply of the other. The adult students were given the example that an increase in the number of shoes and bags supplied at any given time would reduce the supply of *»ponmo«* since these are products of the same material.

After summarising the main points, students were evaluated through the in-built class assessment model of questions and answers. They were asked to show, through examples, their understanding of the various types of supply. Their answers were impressive. Our teaching aids for the day were the teacher's handbag and »*ponmo*«.

The fourth class was held on Wednesday, 29th January 1986. After a review of the last class, the teacher went further into the theories of supply by opening a discourse on the determinants of supply. The class participated actively and were consequently able to identify two factors, namely profit and weather. Under the first factor we found our experience of conventional rudimentary economics being wound up in the local term »*ere*« (profit). This would encompass such other conventional factors as (i) the price of the commodity whereby the supply depends on the good and thus the higher the price the more profitable it is to produce that commodity; (ii) change in the cost of production whereby the price of a commodity must cover the cost of producing that commodity and thus a rise in the cost of production will be reflected in a higher supply price; (iii) the state of technology whereby the development of a new method of production may make the expansion of output at lower cost possible, and as such increase supply.

We tried to break down the earlier first factor of profit into these three conventional factors but we met with a rigid audience who saw us repeating the obvious that they had codified under a simple native term »*ere*«.

At evaluation time we found them basking in their rigid knowledge and it was clear to us that as adult students they had passed the age of easy persuasion and meek acceptance of knowledge like a child religiously accepting myths and fables without question.

The fifth class (Monday, 3rd February 1986) dealt with sole trade business while our major topic for the rest of the exercise (further three weeks) was to be 'business organisations'. The teacher described a sole trader business as one which is owned by a person who manages and controls its operations. She mounted three posters. The first was a poster showing a woman hawking her wares. The second poster showed a market scene with many sole traders and the third poster was a Union Bank Nigeria Ltd. calendar/advertisement poster showing a proud sole proprietor. A discussion then ensued on the advantages of sole proprietorship.

The first two contributors were excited adult students we later identified as sole proprietors of small businesses in town (a barber and a farmer).

The first contributor said,

> *»Nobody competes with him for his profit.«*

The second contributor,

> *»There is nothing he cannot do with his business.«*

Many exciting illustrations and discussions followed and we could move from these to such advantages of sole proprietorship as:

1. He takes all the profit
2. He takes decisions without consulting anybody
3. He can start a business with a small sum
4. He can open and close his business at any time
5. He is close to his customers and can easily make changes according to the taste and preference of his customers.

6th class (Wednesday, 5th February 1986). The objective was to discuss the disadvantages of sole trade business.

The teacher, after summarising the lessons of the day, threw questions to the students which they answered well.

The class ended with home assignments for the adult students. They were asked to come to the next class with information on partnership business.

7th class (Monday, 10th February 1986). The objective of the class was to explain what a partnership organisation is and to discover together its advantages.

We knew without being told that our adult students were prepared for us. As soon as the class started, our students evolved a good discussion on partnership organisation making references to their own particular cases; some of them are in partnership business with their wives who sell their farm proceeds at the market. Profits are then naturally shared in the family, indirectly, through family maintainance.

We also discovered that they seemed to be converting all the disadvantages of the sole proprietorship business, which was the focus of the last class, into the advantages of the partnership business. They highlighted such advantages as:

(a) availability of more capital as this comes from more than one person;

(b) pooling of different skills for smooth running of the business. This was analysed by the farmer-wife partnership trading business.

(c) joint decisions hence better decisions. One of them ventured to explain this with an indigenous proverb:

> *»People assemble together only for wiser decisions and not for more foolish decisions.«*

8th class (Wednesday, 12th February 1986). The objective of the class was to categorise partners into types (active and dormant partners) and to highlight the disadvantages of partnership. The teacher described an active partner as a partner in business who plays an active role in the running of the business and who generally receives a salary in return for his services. The dormant or sleeping partner was described as one who contributes money to the business without playing an active part in the running of the business. The teacher used a controversial analogy that sparked off very exciting discussions. She gave a farmer-wife example of a market retail business, categorising the wife as an active partner and the farmer as a dormant partner. The students reacted to this. Since many of them were part-time farmers, they wanted the farmer to be called an active partner too. Some of them even ventured to call the wife a dormant partner in the business. We found it difficult to reach agreement on this but no doubt everyone understood the distinction between the partnerships.

They highlighted through their discussions two major disadvantages of partnership business. These are (1) the problem of finding trustworthy partners; (2) the problem of reaching joint decisions.

9th class (Monday, 17th February 1986). — The class was concerned with co-operative societies which were defined as the coming together of people with the same interests and with no limit to membership. This was nothing new to the students, most of whom had been involved in one way or the other with this type of scheme. All these schemes traditionally help members in money matters, service production etc.

The teacher then classified co-operative societies into (a) producer marketing co-operatives which belong to workers or producers of cash crops who want to market products which are common to membership themselves. The teacher than played a tape-recorded conversation about a farmer's co-operative society in Ipetumodu in Oranmiyan Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria which stated the reasons for forming the co-operative organisation; (b) consumer co-operatives which are formed in urban centres to enable members to purchase consumer necessities and equipment at reasonable prices. The teacher also played back a taperecorded interview with the chairman of Raufu Williams Co-operative Society in Lagos, Nigeria.

We had few problems highlighting the advantages of co-operatives to our students in this class, since most of them knew what co-operative societies were all about:

(i) Greater capital from many sources
(ii) Easier and better solutions to money matters through credit
(iii) Reduced cheating
(iv) No discrimination to membership
(v) Equality of members.

The demerits were also highlighted such as:

(i) Slow decision reaching process
(ii) A few unscrupulous members might destabilise the society
(iii) Sometimes competence in the management of society affairs is lacking.

10th class (Wednesday, 19th February 1986) — This was an evaluation class. Evaluation took place by means of an objective test with 20 questions to cover all the topics taught. Marked scripts gave the class a mean score of 12.8 with 72.5% pass.

Our students were generally punctual and our interviews with them which focused on the conduct of classes, method of instruction, relevance of topics to the lives of students and whether topics were clearly understood, showed that they all feel these are relevant to their lives. The respondents lay claim to a very good understanding of the topics taught and judged the methods of instruction as good. They wanted more of these kind of classes.

Not much was noticed as far as behavioural changes were concerned. There were, however, manifestations of such which perhaps show that there are going to be positive transformations in their day-to-day living and that they appreciated our presence. First, some of the adult students made our job easier by bringing along farm equipment that could be used as teaching aids in classes. They brought oranges, pineapples, palm oil and groundnut oil etc. most of which were given to us as gifts to show their appreciation of our efforts. They also saw us to our car everyday after classes.

Second, after our last class they asked us to return to provide more such programmes and further stressed that they were excited to see the university taking interest in the welfare and education of the illiterate members of the community.

Third was the product of a very interesting joke told in one of the classes. One of the adult students said that one of his classmates eats a lot of *»ponmo«* (cow hide) because his feet are too big for shoes and hence he compensates for the leather he misses by not wearing shoes through his voracious consumption of *»ponmo«*. This joke gives a subtle demonstration of the understanding of the topics »substitute demand« and »substitute supply« by this adult student.

Conclusion

We tried and found out it was possible to teach old dogs new tricks and that life could be made more meaningful for adults if literacy is made more functional by adding rudimentary economics. We discovered that learners gain more from such an experience and it makes their attendance at classes more meaningful as students of economics. We hope to carry out further adventures in this field and we recommend to adult educators all over to do the same. It is worthwhile.

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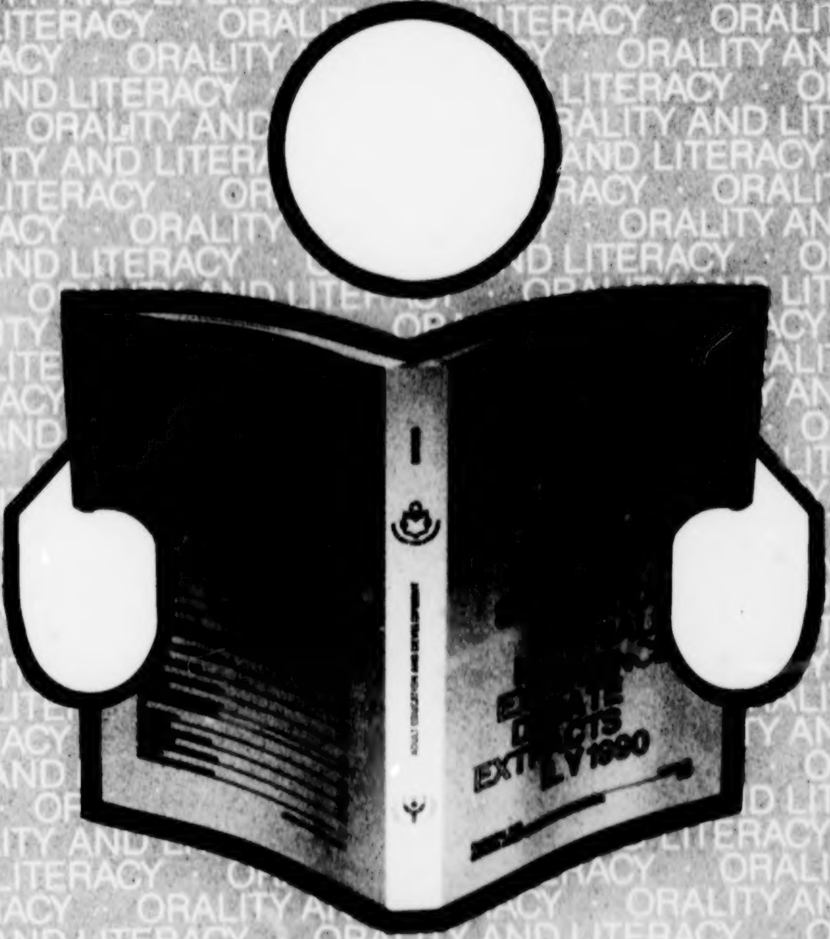

ORALITY AND LITERACY

A man cultivates a field and sows stones

Once there was a drought which caused a severe famine called 'le'. As this draught developed, all fruits in the world dried up. At that time, the peasants cultivated their fields and did not even harvest enough seed for sowing. And then they went to search for stones and they started to sow, since one cannot cultivate a field without sowing something. Someone asked a peasant why he did so. And he said: »A man cannot cultivate a field and leave out the sowing. One has always to try everything in order to see.« Because the sowing of stones might become (even) now a good thing, one says: »A peasant works his fields and sows stones. — One has always to try everything in order to see.«

Interpretation:

This story was told to an audience in a specific context and it was related to this context. It was told in one of the first meetings of the adult literacy group. After the meeting, the narrator (Luwi Klikpo) gave me the following explanation for his choice of the story: »The 'wema' (paper, scripts, writings) which we discussed, is not a thing of the Africans. The white man ('yovo') came and said that we will learn this 'wema'.

Necessarily we have to try this thing out ('ten … ten kpon') before we can reach the goal. That is why we included this proverb ('loo', he means the point formulated at the end of the story) as a slogan for our adult literacy group.«

The narrator was one of the most active members of this adult literacy group. But is is remarkable that he chose an entirely different type of propaganda than did the literate animators of the group. The animators were full of optimism. »Do the literacy, because it is rewarding«, was their argument. In his argumentation this peasant was much closer to a part of the audience who were arguing »leave it, it is useless«. The argumentation of this peasant is difficult to translate into categories of European rhetoric. It is a kind of sceptic activism. He does **not** *make any promise. He just argues »it is probable that it is useless, but we should have tried this, considering the situation which is so bad that it cannot become worse.«*

in: Georg Elwert, *History, Humour and Social Control — Genres of Oral Literature and Registers of Speech Among the Aizo (Benin)*, manuscript, p. 10.

Andreas Fugelsang and Dale Chandler

The leap to literacy

'The mouth is the home of words'
Swahili proverb)

When we wrote Lute Mirla's name on the blackboard and read it aloud to her, she responded by opening her mouth with a petrified look in her eyes. Then, with a whine, she clasped a hand over her mouth as if to stop her soul from escaping. Throughout some years of adult education work in Africa and elsewhere, we have observed on occasion this initial reaction of terrified disbelief in the written word. Writing is such a matter of course to literates that we seem incapable of understanding how fundamentally it affects people's perception of reality. In oral societies, the mouth is the home of words and the soul inhabits the breath. Meaning emanates from a human face and not from a blackboard or a sheet of paper. The self does not perceive itself as separable from the social environment. The perception of self is an expression of social accountability.

Marcel Proust is credited with saying that life is an error of perception. Although we shall not pursue that paradox, we think it is important to attempt a description of the strange perceptual leap that occurs when people acquire literacy. What are the implications of suddenly grasping that the transformation of the word from the sound of breath to a thing that can be manipulated is possible? Our attempt to describe the spoken word in writing is, in itself, a paradox which we may not overcome successfully. We have a gut feeling that the very language we use is problematic and incapable of catching what we sense is there.

Throughout the Third World, adult literacy classes are very much alike: the heavy eyelids in the timid kerosene light, the uneasy strokes of the pencils on the notebooks, the choir of searching voices repeating what the instructor has written on the blackboard. A certain tension is discernible, as if they feared losing their word to silence. Reading the word without saying it aloud is a leap into uncertainty.

Reading is one perceptual skill; listening is another. To a large extent, a person's sensory experience is the result of cultural training in perceptual skills. Sensory experience is only partly conditioned by the basic constitution of the senses themselves. In other words, all cultures have a specific way of controlling people's sensory experiences. Various senses are involved selectively so that when one sense is emphasized, it happens at the expense of others.

Quite literally, the written culture focuses on the sense of sight. The skill of seeing and of transforming the seen is trained to extremely high levels of competence in areas such as the observation of regularity, the identification of linearity, and the capacity for visual imagining, conceptualizing and formalizing of information. These skills are developed at the expense of such senses as hearing/listening, body movement or touch. To perform her or his best, the reader must sit still in a quiet place. The mathematics teacher demands absolute silence and concentration in the classroom. In a way, the literate person's sensory experience has hindered the development of others.

The oral culture's emphasis on the spoken or sung word means that sight and hearing are given more or less equal weight, perhaps with a slight preference for hearing. Other sensory experiences — skin sensations, smell, taste, temperature, body movement and balance — are also highly stimulated. The dancers, singers and drummers at the Kuomboka feast in Barotseland usually close their eyes so their kinesthetic skills, their perception of rhythm, flow more freely through them. In oral cultures, there is a fuller application of all sensory capacities and a more explicit integration of the corresponding experiences. Even the experience of silence is integrated. It is the privilege of the elders to be silent for a long while before they pronounce on an important matter.

The oral culture develops a cyclical perception of reality. One might suggest that it is perceptually more wholesome because it surrounds and envelops people. Whereas the written culture confronts them, it is curved and multi-dimensional whereas the written culture is one-directional. While writing is an action applying a technology external to the body, speaking or singing is an action originating in the interior of the body.

Elitism of the written word

Four to five thousand years ago, the scribes held an extremely powerful position in the cities of the Golden Triangle located between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The archaelogical record indicates that writing was invented in these lush river valleys. Scribes were the only literates and jealously guarded their monopoly of the craft of writing and reading. The written word became enshrined in mystifying connotations that it never lost. During this time, the righteousness of knowledge from books was first established and accompanied by the derogation of the illiterate, i.e. those who were word-less and, therefore, worth-less. The sacred scrolls, the testament tablets, the holy canons became revered not strictly for their content but equally because of the ritual attention surrounding their use. Doesn't our 'belief' in academic rigour and analysis as indisputable ways to define and explain reality, stem from these ancient origins?

The scribes held an elevated status that was linked to their control of this new system of written information. Their place in society must have been similar to scientists today who are involved in biogenetic engineering or space research and who manipulate information beyond the mental skill-level of most of us. It is likely that scribes were held in a certain fear and awe by society. As cities in the Golden Triangle became more complex, the kings could not maintain control without the help of the scribes.

The written language became the practical tool and mystifying symbol of the power of a removed and elevated officialdom. It became antiethetical to the deliberately ambiguous and fluid nature of oral language with its phonetic and metaphoric playfulness, its euphemisms and idioms, and its imaginative application of proverbial knowledge. From its very inception the written language was elitist. It was an instrument used by officials for control, manipulation and exploitation of the unlettered people. The advent of writing meant that officialdom had a means to undermine the strongest power of the oral society: the power of the collective memory. Now, history could be written to suit the needs and reflect the perceptions of the ruling class. In that respect, history is repeating itself.

Today's official emphasis on the promotion of literacy among the peoples of the Third World must be questioned. Literacy may lead a few individuals into a process of social liberation. But the larger literate majority is likely to become even more susceptible to governmental propaganda and political manipulation than their sisters and brothers who are not literate.

Consequences of acquiring literacy

The collective memory of the oral culture has not been sufficiently understood and appreciated. Those who have worked in Third World villages will know that people who cannot read and write often have exceptional memory capacity. Procedures for action, particular events or circumstances, and detailed stories can be rendered orally with great accuracy. People are capable of translating oral information into action or reproducing it verbatim. The old woman, Mukahamubwatu, knew the names of several hundred trees and bushes and could describe their use to us in a highly detailed manner. What has been less understood is the role of the collective memory. It is not necessarily the individual memory that plays the predominant part. More important for the enhancement of accuracy and detail is the interplay of many minds.

The oral community as a whole, and over time, is functioning as a system for information processing where storage and retrieval is highly efficient. In several cases it has been possible to ascertain that traditional narratives recorded a century ago or even earlier are remarkably similar to those recorded quite recently. Also, rarely has it been recognized that the collective memory and decision-making processes of oral societies are capacities which can deal effectively with issues and change, in other words, development.

The strength of an oral society lies in its power of observation and the accumulation of experiential knowledge about the natural environment. This knowledge is critical to its survival. It encompasses not only technical or practical knowledge but also psychological insight and social wisdom. An oral culture deeply civilized in the best sense of the word. The information acquired about nature is used not to control it implacably or transform it fundamentally but to adapt the society's relationship to nature. Premised on this attitude, the collective memory works consensually, i.e. it processes information by reducing cognitive dissonance. As Maasai elders say, *Meishaa elukunya nabo engeno:* one head cannot hold all wisdom. When it concerns intellectual capacity, the group is sovereign to the individual.

With the above considerations in mind, should we not take another look at the Western approach to adult education which largely focuses on individual performance rather than on a deepening of the collective memory of a group? There are major consequences in acquiring literacy which are not understood. Immediately when a person acquires literacy, her or his memory capacity degenerates drastically. When you can take notes or retrieve information from a book, it is not necessary to remember. The literate individual is no longer vitally related to the community and fails to trust its joint insights and wisdom. The literate community is no longer a community of shared interests. More aptly it is a group of individualists.

What are we trying to say? We are not saying that the leap to literacy is a useless or undesirable effort. Nor are most oral and written cultures as clearly separable as they were. We are saying that there is a price to pay for passing the width and depth of a divide. The Swahili people had no trouble recognizing the truth of *Mpanda farasi wawili, hupasuka msamba:* one who rides two horses at once will split asunder.

The translation of oral tradition, especially oral literature, is one of the major areas of research of Professor Dr. Wilhelm Möhlig. He teaches at the Institute of African Studies, University of Cologne. His manuscript is a revised version of a lecture he presented at a meeting of scholars of African studies last year.

Wilhelm J.G. Möhlig

Translation of oral literary texts in Africa

1. Translation — a task of many problems

Source language and target language

If one wishes to make African literary texts accessible to a broader, international reading public, one cannot avoid translating them into widespread languages such as English, French or German because the languages in which these, mainly oral, texts are written, are understood by few beyond their source of origin. The translator thus has to work, as a rule, with two languages: the **source language** in which an oral literary text has been originally written and the **target language** which one is translating into.

Close and free translation

There are many possibilities to translate an oral literary text into another language. The translation which resembles the linguistic structure of the source language most closely, is characterised as **close** or **literal** translation. Usually this form of translation is added interlinearly or synoptically to the source text. The advantage here lies in the fact that it provides insight into the syntactical structure of the source language and even into its metaphorics. For the literary oriented reader, it is thus both informative and indispensable. It does not provide insight into the literary aesthetic qualities of the original African text however. If one left the matter here, one would provoke a multitude of misunderstandings and misinterpretations on the part of the reader which would make a correct literary evaluation difficult. To avoid major disadvantages of this nature, a **free** translation, which attempts to reproduce the content of the text according to the grammatical rules of the target language, is often included.

Example (from Swahili):

Siku	**moja**	**wa-toto**	**wa-wili**	**wa-li-kwenda**	**mw-itu-ni**
9/day	9/a	2-child	2-two	they-PRT-go	3-wood-LOK

Wa-li-taka	**ku-cheza**	**huko.**
They-PRT-want	15-play	there.

(Note: Within words separable morphemes are characterised by hyphens, inherent morphemes by diagonal strokes. The numbers relate to different nominal classes in Swahili. PRT = preterite; LOC = locative.)

Free translation:
One day two children went into the wood. They wanted to play there.

Adaptation

At the other end of a broad spectrum of differing methods of translation is adaptation. It aims, above all, at contributing to the literature of the target language. Even if otherwise desired, this form of translation can provide only little insight into the literary merits of the original text. Famous examples for individual, creative translations are found in La Fontaine's fables. They are based on classical texts yet they are regarded exclusively as masterpieces of French literature. A glance at past and present publication lists of *Erich Röth Publishers* (Eisenach, later Kassel) or those of *Eugen Diederich Publishers* (Jena, later Düsseldorf - Cologne) reveals that African oral literature has often been exploited in this way.

Basic aims of translation

The choice of the type of translation depends, on the one hand, on the aims which one is persuing and, on the other hand, on the readers which one would like to reach. Whatever decision is made, we have to accept the fact that there is no ideal method of translation and probably never will be on account of the divergent points of view which have to be taken into consideration. In selecting a translation method it will always be a question of making a compromise between the following three basic aims:

1. Adherence to the linguistic structure of the source language.

2. Loyalty to the meaning and significance of the source text.

3. Commitment to the artistic and aesthetic substance of the source text with regard to both structure and content.

The four aspects of translation method

In the following I would like to discuss a few finer problems based on my own research experience in the Bantu area and with the Temne in Sierra Leone. I intend to do this under four methodological aspects:

1. the syntactical aspect
2. the semantic aspect
3. the pragmatic aspect
4. the aesthetic-oral literary aspect.

The first three aspects stem from a semiotic model within the framework of which I believe all translation problems can be discussed and, to a certain extent, solved. The fourth aspect is situated on the periphery of the semiotic model. It is based on the fact that oral literature texts do not only have to be translated but also put into the written form, that is transposed from one medium of communication to another. This aspect touches on problems concerned with the fact that translation of the written word involves not only a recording of factual content but also emotional content.

2. The syntactical aspect

The syntactical aspect relates to the superficial linguistic structure of a text, that is, the way in which the author has ordered the words and sentences. Two types of structure can be differentiated here: that where the unit of reference is the sentence and that derived from the discourse as a whole.

2.1 The sentence as unit of reference

Incongruence of syntactical structures

On the one hand linguists adhere to the principle that one can translate any text of any language into any other language. On the other hand, they agree unanimously that this, at a syntactical-morphological sentence level, is only seldom, if at all, possible by means of a one-to-one transference. Even with related languages the syntactical structures are often too incongruous for this. In order to translate the correct meaning as well as the aesthetic quality of the source text adequately into the target language, one often has to radically alter the syntactical sentence structure of the source language. How this is carried out (often a process involving several stages) can be seen in the following example (from Swahili):

Source text:	**moyo wake ulikuwa unakwenda mbio.**
Literal translation:	Heart his it-was it-was-going gallop.
Close translation:	His heart galloped.
Free translation:	He had a fast heart beat.
Figurative translation:	He had a restless heart. (He was impatient).

Discussion of the example

Apart from the fact that in the source text the possessive is placed after the noun and a progressive in the past tense is spread over two verb forms — auxiliary **kuwa** and main verb **kwenda** —, the specific heart movement is also structured differently from the English from the syntactical point of view. The main verb **kwenda**, which means 'to go', and the nominal extension **mbio**, which characterises a certain pace, 'trot' or 'gallop', are replaced in the English through a single verb, namely 'to trot' or 'to gallop'. Instead of reproducing the Swahili sentence with the close translation 'His heart galloped', the context, from which the example is taken, suggests that the whole sentence be syntactically restructured. A comparison of context reveals namely that the possessor in the Swahili text is the actual qualifier of the message and should thus be made the subject in the grammatical structure of the English sentence.

All other elements of the Swahili sentence stand in relationship to this qualifier and can therefore be syntactically constructed as complement of a verbal phrase with 'to have' in the target language. The provisional translation resulting herefrom reads as follows: 'He had a galloping heart beat.' This formulation is still not acceptable from a literary point of view. When one namely interprets the semantics of this wording at a further level in the pragmatic context of the text, it is possible to derive a translation from the 'free' syntactical structure which comes closest to the literal meaning of the sentence: 'He had a restless heart.' As can be seen from the context, it was not the aim of the author to say that the person, characterised as 'he', had a fast pulse rate but that he was impatient. The galloping pace here is a symbol for restlessness. A translation which adheres closely to the syntactical structure of the original text, such as 'His heart beat restlessly', would not do justice to the literary quality of the Swahili text, for restlessness in the target language can only be correctly applied to a person, respectively his/her character or emotions. The suggested translation 'His heart beat restlessly' would thus assign to the heart the role of a human agent, which although fundamentally possible in metaphorical terms, would here however falsify the pragmatic message of the text. If one chooses a non-agentive formulation however, such as 'He had a restless heart', 'heart' in English is immediately understood metaphorically as the embodiment of a person's feelings, just as it corresponds to one of the basic meanings of the Swahili 'moyo'. 'Moyo' characterises both the physical organ 'heart' and the more general 'character' or 'feeling'. This ambiguity in meaning constitutes the humour and thereby the aesthetic charm of the Swahili sentence. The translation 'He had a restless heart' comes close to this.

On the significance of sentence-for-sentence-translations

It can generally be said with regard to the significance of sentence-for-sentence translations that syntactically close translations (or all literal translations) are only a didactic measure which at least makes the source text more readily accessible to the academic reader and thus indispensable to him. It is not a question here however of translations which one could assess as adequate with respect to the target language. Such translations can only be achieved at the level of discourse, that is, with reference to the text in its totality. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 The discourse as unit of reference

The general pragmatic function of the text

Every coherent text contains as a whole one or several messages which constitute its concrete meaning. All elements of a text are carriers of the message regardless of their syntactical position. They all have an equal role in this general pragmatic function ranging from the discourse as a whole to the individual sections of the text (chapters, paragraphs, episodes) to sentences, phrases and words, right down to the morphological level. From the perspective of the individual elements of a text, one can thus say that apart from their general semantic or grammatical function in the text, they take on concrete meaning through the fact that they are bearers of a certain message. In addition to this, their meaning is also determined by the other neighbouring linguistic elements.

Morphological level and discourse

In order to illustrate these relationships and their significance for translation, we want to start at the morphological level. Many African languages do not express gender through the noun. In order to understand a story however, it is important to know that the hyena, for example, adopts a male role or a certain bird a female role. If one translates the corresponding African nouns with *'die Hyäne'* (fem.) — the hyena — and *'der Vogel'* (masc.) — the bird — in German, this can lead to affective misunderstandings and contradictions, with *'die Hyäne'* (fem.) being addressed as 'father' and *'der Vogel'* (masc.) als 'mother'. To make the roles of the characters clear from the start for the readers of a German or English translation, it is important to consider saying 'the hyena-father' and the 'bird-mother'.

Syntactical level and discourse

Another problem of a different nature arises from the fact that the rules of syntax, according to which actions and thoughts are ordered in the discourse, can differ considerably between source language and target language. Thus a translation which retains the discursive order of the African source language often sounds stilted and inelegant; sometimes even illogical. A European reader who does not have direct access to the source text, can thus easily gain the impression that African literature is characterised by these negative features. In a free translation which places importance on reproducing the literary qualities of the source text, it is imperative to order the actions and thoughts according to the syntactical rules of the target language. This does not mean that the translator has to shuffle and reorder the thoughts of the entire source text like a card game. The framework of reference, within which the syntactical rearrangement seems called for and meaningful, can only be a dramaturgically or didactically determined section in the discourse which the author, respectively, the narrator of the source text himself has understood and accordingly indicated as unit of thought and action. It is generally a question of sections in the discourse where time, place and characters remain largely constant i.e. sections which are generally referred to as episodes.

The episode as basic unit for translation

From this empirical observation, a general recommendation for adequate translations of African languages can be made: The translator should not choose the sentence but rather the episode as basic unit. I want to attempt to illustrate this with an example taken from Aniceti Kitereza's novel 'Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonka':

Walipokuwa karibu na kufika katika nchi ya mkwe wao, yaani maskanini pake, kwa kuwa waliondoka kwao kabla ya alfajiri, wakipita njia zenye umande mwingi wakati wa mvua na kuvuka mito yenye maji tele, wote wali(kw)en(d)a katika kichaka kilichokuwa pale karibu na njia waliyopitia; kwa sababu ya umande na maji ya mito waliyovuka, matumbo yao yalikuwa yamechafuka.

The sentence oriented translation reads as follows:
As they were almost about to arrive in their son-in-law's district, that is, at his home, because they had left home before daybreak, had walked along wet roads in the rain and crossed riverbeds swollen with water, they both went into a thicket near the road; because of the wetness of the road and the flooding of the rivers which they had crossed, the lower parts of their bodies were dirty.

My proposed translation, related to the whole episode, reads as follows:

Before they reached the home of their son-in-law, they went into a thicket near the road to tidy themselves up. They had started from home before daybreak and had used roads which were wet because of the heavy rain. They had also had to cross flooded riverbeds and had thus become dirty.

Analysis of the example

The episode contains the following thoughts in the order of the source text:

1. Determination of time: when the characters arrived at their destination.
2. 1. Reason for the action in (5): early start
3. 2. Reason for the action in (5): wet roads
4. 3. Reason for the action in (5): flooding
5. Main action: the characters go into a thicket
6. Again 2. reason for the action in (5)
7. Again 3. reason for the action in (5)
8. Main reason for action in (5): they were dirty.

It would not be possible to copy the thought patterns of the Swahili text in any European target language without creating an impression of confusion and illogicality. To start the text with the reasons for the principal action which is yet to follow, is fundamentally possible but not when it is a question of a list, respectively, an accumulation of reasons. It would be completely out of the question to position the main action in the midst of a statement of reasons. In a German or English translation, it is recommendable to begin with the main action (5) after the determination of time (1), and to follow on with the purpose of the action which is only implicitly contained in the source text, namely: to tidy themselves up. The various reasons, explaining why it was necessary for the characters to tidy themselves up can be added as simple pieces of information. The causal parenthesis of the whole structural figure of the text can be attained in German or English by returning at the end to the sequence of ideas of the source text, yet introducing the main reasons for the principal action of the episode (8) with an adverbial phrase 'so, in this way'.

Choice of translation strategy — a subjective decision

In literary translations, such structural differences between African source languages and European target languages are the order of the day. The type of strategy one applies in each individual case depends, as already mentioned, on the readers for whom one is translating and on the aims one has in mind with the translation. It is thus always a question of the translator's subjective decision and not of the application of certain objective rules.

3. The semantic aspect

Socio-cultural background

Oral literary texts are written before a certain socio-cultural backdrop which, as a rule, has little in common with the culture and society of the target language. The cultural insider refers, consciously or unconsciously, to this background knowledge when he wants to understand a certain text. Knowledge of environmental phenomena also falls into this area. In connection with the text interpretation which aims at comprehension, we are talking here about the semantic aspect. The more distant the cultures of the original and target languages are from each other, the less the reader of the translation will be able to apply background knowledge of his own environment and culture in the semantic interpretation of the text — unless he is specifically trained in the field. The translator must therefore perform the act of semantic interpretation within the translation so that the reader can adequately understand and assess the specific cultural actions and reactions of the characters in the text. There are however limits to this, not only to the translatable nature of a text, but also to the necessity of translation.

Exotic trimmings

One can assume that every reader of an African text can be confronted with a certain amount of unfamiliar 'exoticisms'. This is particularly the case when the 'exoticisms' are unimportant for an understanding of the action. Examples for this can be found in the source text where specific terminology has been used to describe the environment (plants, animals) or household commodities (e.g. certain types of calabashes). In translating such a passage it is not necessary to talk in precise zoological terms about a 'spotted hyena'; it suffices to describe the animal quite simply as a 'hyena'.

Comprehension of important exoticisms

It is somewhat more difficult to deal with cases where the source text addresses cultural or social situations which are completely unknown in the culture of the target language. I can think here of an example from a Temne story where the heroine turns to a particular person in order to break the spell placed on her peanut plantation. In the Temne text this person is referred to, without further explanation, as Ya-Bondigba. This name means literally 'female leader of the Bondo'. Bondo is the secret women's society among the Temne, traditionally responsible for women's matters in the social area. In order to make it clear to the reader why the heroine turns to the Ya-Bondigba after several fruitless attempts at breaking the spell, one is compelled to add a commentary to the translation. This can be of a brief nature. In one concrete case I was able to limit the translation to: 'She turned to the leader of the Bondo secret society for women.' To make the context clear, it suffices in this case to inform the reader that the heroine turns to a higher authority in the social hierarchy to solve her problem. What form of authority this actually is, is however irrelevant to the rest of the story.

Symbolic values and figurative meanings

From the semantic perspective, the majority of translating problems arise where symbolic values or figurative meanings are connected to a certain expression or terminus. When one hears the animal name 'likuwi' in for example, Dciriku, a Bantu language in the border area between Angola and Namibia, this word immediately signifies 'white-headed vulture' (*trigonoceps occipitalis)*. For the insider, however, it bears the meaning 'man about town, spendthrift, social parasite'. In English the bird species 'vulture' is, contrary to this, associated with an avaricious or rapacious person. The semantic bridge between the meaning 'vulture' on the one hand and 'man about town' on the other is based on two characteristics. On the one side this species of vulture possesses a colourful and luxuriant plumage which reminds one of a lavishly dressed person. On the other side he feeds on carrion, that is, he eats what others have killed for him. In other words he does not work for his food. Several possibilities for translation arise in such a case, one of which has to be decided on. If indicated by the text as a whole, one should translate the word 'likuwi' directly with 'man about town' without adding anything further. For the case where the source text is consciously seeking ambiguity of expression, one should retain the basic meaning and add, as paraphrase, footnote or remark in brackets, a short commentary. Of course one can also think of a context where the bird species itself is meant. Here the original meaning 'vulture' is used in the translation.

Symbols

A further problem in the area of semantics arises in the translation of symbols. This is seen for instance, when a figure in the text is assigned the role of the villain. A traditional narrator can, by equipping the figure concerned with stereotyped attributes, make his villain recognisable as such for the insider right from the start without having to mention villainry itself directly by name. For the reader of the translation however, this information may possibly emerge only in the course of the text, through gradual revelation. False tracks could thus be laid which were not intended by the author of the original text. To avoid this, one can make the symbols clear by adding a suitable adjective (even if such an adjective does not occur in the original text) when the figure is mentioned for the first time. Delayed use of symbolic value attribution in the translation process represents a further recognised translation strategy, the application of which however is left completely in the hands of the translator.

4. The pragmatic aspect

The sense of a text

Texts do not only have a meaning which is provided by grammar and vocabulary and is interpretable in a socio-cultural framework, but also a sense. This results, on the one hand, from the socio-cultural background of the author and on the other hand, from the situation which existed when the texts were composed. In this way certain passages, for example, in a narrative text relate to a concrete audience or to specific current events. They give the text, beyond its semantic meaning, a specific significance which must be translated with care as the reader of the target language cannot readily identify it from the semantics of the text.

Proverbs as illustrative examples

From my own experience, it is particularly important to pay attention to the pragmatic aspect when translating proverbs. This widespread form of writing in Africa, which has been frequently analysed in oral literary studies, lives from its pragmatic significance. The semantic elements serve only as vehicle for the pragmatic sense. There is a proverb among the Dciriku which, in the literal translation, reads as follows:

'In the hunter's trail lies the meat'.

On has to imagine the following situation: A young husband criticises the appearance of his bride whom he has seen for the very first time after the marriage ceremony in accordance with tradition. Those who hear his criticism reply with this proverb, the meaning of which can be paraphrased in the following way:

One cannot make the relatives responsible for outer failings of the wife.

To build the bridge of thought between the semantic meaning of the proverb and its concrete sense, one has to know that the Dciriku live on the edge of the Kalahari desert. Heavy burdens, such as the meat of slain animals are traditionally dragged over the ground. They leave behind them a characteristic trail which reveals to the experienced observer what kind of object has been dragged through the sand. If one follows the trail, one will eventually encounter the object concerned. In addition to this, one has to know that a young suitor, although he does not get to see his bride until after the wedding, does obtain the opportunity during the marriage contract negotiations, to see the mother of the bride. According to the belief of the Dciriku, daughters grow to resemble their mothers. If the suitor duly studies the 'trail' during the negotiations he can by all means form a concrete idea of his 'prey'. If he fails to do so, he alone carries the risk.

5. The aesthetic-oral literary aspect

Characteristics of orality

Finally thought should be given to the fact that it is a question of **verbal** art in the source texts being translated. Much of that which constitutes the artistic merit of such a text is brought about by linguistic and paralinguistic elements which are closely linked to orality. These not only include gestures but also speaking in a disguised voice, the raising of voice tone and the lowering of voice tone, including whispering. Also included are speech rhythm, the use of ideophones and onomatopoeia as well as audience feedback.

The translation of gestures

In the area of gestures, we differentiate between those gestures which have only a dramaturgical function as for example gestures to give emphasis or to increase tension and those which are semantically important. The latter group includes e.g. rowing movements which the narrator performs without movement on water being actually expresed in the text. One can do this with the assistance of a specific expression which does not occur in this form in the source text. Original expression of speech plus gestures can in this way be linguistically merged into one in the translation. In the example mentioned above one could, in place of the original text version 'He crossed to the other bank' say 'He rowed to the other bank'. The gestures can also be added to the text in brackets, like stage directions in a play. Example: »He crossed to the other bank« (Narrator imitating rowing movements). The latter solution could well be applied to short descriptive passages; in longer passages however the flow of thought could be interrupted and reading rendered more difficult.

Talking in a disguised voice

In my recordings of Temne stories, I often encountered texts spoken in a disguised voice. Between the individual sections of dialogue, for example between a male and a female figure in a story, the sentence 'ko p[illegible] o:' = '3rd person singular said' often occured without it being clear from the text whether the male or female partner was meant. In an oral performance of the text it was easy to make the differentiation with the narrator talking in a high pitched voice or in a low pitched voice depending on the role. In a European translation a pronoun specifying gender e.g. 'he' or 'she' can be used in place of the neutral 'ko', without having to explain the attendant paralinguistic circumstances. In target languages where this is not possible one would have to use, instead of the pronouns, the corresponding nouns denoting gender e.g. 'The woman said'.

Change in volume

Crescendo, decrescendo and pauses during narration can, in a translation which is not directly concerned with examining the performance dynamics of oral literature, be omitted because these paralinguistic elements fulfill only a dramaturgical function, not a semantic or pragmatic function. If one does wish to incorporate these elements in the written text however, different letter types, alternating between capitals and small letters, repetition of phonetic symbols, graphic layout etc can be used.

Ideophones and onomatopoeia

One particular difficulty I would like to look at finally is the translation of ideophones and onomatopoeia. Ideophones are current lexemes which create an affective relationship to the semantic content through their phonetic form. Onomatopes are on the other hand, phonetic sequences which are only aimed at evoking an affective impression. The first group includes the English verbs 'to whiz' and 'to buzz'; the second group included, for example, imitatons of animal noises or the phonetic transposition of sense impressions and feelings in general. In order to translate the affective value of a certain word, one will often seek a suitable expression in vain. In practise it is often observed that translators select an expression which is weighted quite differently. If this does not have any influence on the sense and meaning of the text as a whole, such 'falsifications' can be tolerated. In reproducing onomatopoeia in the target language there are two different possibilities: either one leaves it in its untranslated form or one looks for a true equivalent in the target language. The first possibility can be applied when the function of the onomatopoeic expression in the source language is recognisable from the context. I can think of an example here from a Temne text where monsters, in pursuit of their victims, attempt to jump across a river and one by one fall into the water, straight into the jaws of awaiting crocodiles. This course of events is rendered in the source text with 'tiring gbot, tiring gbot'. In English one could translate the passage with 'splash, splash and out'. The affective value of the expression which is conveyed in Temne by the alternation between the high front vowel i and the rear vowel o, has not been completely captured by the English translation. This is why I would be inclined to leave the Temne expression untranslated in spite of the fundamental possibility to render it into English. Hence: 'And one by one they fell into the river — tiring gbot — straight into the jaws of the crocodile'.

Summary

Translations are problematic because there are various translation strategies which always enable only a part of the source text to be translated adequately. Fundamentally one can express every cognitive fact in every language. In this respect each of these facts can be readily translated from one language into any other language. This applies only to the abstract semantic or pragmatic core of a text however, not to its syntax, metaphorics or its aesthetic content. The latter qualities are largely related to a specific linguistic culture. They can be replaced at best with similar forms of expression in the translation. Every translation is after all a compromise between adherence to the linguistic structure of the source text, loyalty to its sense and its meaning and respect for its aesthetic content. Where the various emphases should be placed, is up to the discretion and the responsibility of the translator. In spite of the fundamental subjectivity of translating, there are certain empirical values which allow the critical eye to recognise a translation as being good or bad. I have attempted in this brief outline to analyse a few of these values before the background of a semiotic model, details of which I could not elaborate on here however. In the last section I have dealt with questions which result from the fact that oral literary texts with which we are particularly concerned in Africa, do not only have to be translated but also, beyond this, transposed from the oral form into the written form.

Quand un vieux meurt en Afrique,
c'est une bibliothèque qui brûle.

When an old man dies in Africa,
it is a library that burns.

Cuando un viejo muere en Africa,
una biblioteca se quema.

Amadou Hampaté Bâ

Prof. Dr. Georg Elwert contributed two manuscripts to our journal several years ago. One was on his experiences with a literacy programme in Benin. The other was co-authored by Michael Gieseke and was a form of comparative study which looked at literacy campaigns in Benin and literacy endeavours in medieval Germany. Professor Elwert teaches at the Institute of Ethnology, Free University of Berlin.

Georg Elwert

The social and institutional context of literacy

A Background and introduction

The transition to literate culture is one of the more unlikely events in the history of man's evolutionary development. In the theory of social development Havelock, Goody and Luhman have defined this transition as a milestone in social evolution[1]. Oral culture can be seen to exhibit a particular efficacy compared to which written culture must seem inefficient and cumbersome. Written culture can only fulfill those characteristics attributed to it, when embedded in a specific institutionalized context[2]. Hence the characteristic inefficacy of development aid literacy programmes can be accounted for by the absence of this institutionalized context[3].

The implausible, impractical nature of written usage and written culture becomes more evident when we examine more closely the advantageous features of oral culture. This is illustrated most clearly by the efficient means by which information is stored in oral culture. The written form only succeeds in providing a full range of informative services pertaining to technological development when complemented by a »written language« and supported by specific social institutions which establish and stabilize its identity independent of oral culture. In our society written culture would seem to be so deeply rooted, with written jargon exerting a dominating influence on everyday oral communication, that the necessity to establish and protect the identity of written language against the pervading forces of oral culture would not appear to be a very obvious one. Hence, it will be necessary here to examine some aspects of oral culture more closely. The conditions which lie behind the stability of the written form and written language are a developed linguistic form and the institutionalized consolidation of the form and reputation of written language.

Against the background of the persistence of oral tradition in developing countries and the inevitable failure of literacy programmes in the absence of institutionalized back-up, the role of two major systems of communication becomes clear which, with the help of industrialized countries, have become a pervasive presence in largely illiterate developing countries without, however, initiating much change. These are rural advisory services and the oral mass communication media. It is my opinion that in the absence of a literate context, any attempt at mass integration of these societies into a communicative process will prove to be an evolutionary dead end.

Commentary on the historical significance of the transition to written culture has always been of a general nature. It cannot be determined from the analysis of one culture alone, whether the event of writing, or other changes emerging at the same time, were responsible for structural changes in a given society. Thus, specific historical studies[4] are always implicitly comparative in making such claims. The widely accepted notion of the intrinsic transformatory potential of literacy could easily be proven, if it could be shown that besides in societies with extensive institutional activity and rapid technological evolution, literacy can only be found in narrowly definable, exceptional cases. Closer study of sources, however, would seem to show that the use of writing and symbolic systems similar to writing, is not nearly as unusual as often assumed by myself and others[5]. It can be shown that memory aids in the form of graphic memo-systems existed in almost all cultural regions of the old and new world (Australia and the Arctic included).

In some places transition from symbolic systems to writing and even to phonetic script can be observed, e.g. Liberian Vai script. In others it is probable that the last examples of such symbolic systems made available to us from the colonial era are incomplete (Easter Island, Cuna-Indians), and merely represent regressive forms, evolved from systems formerly more highly developed[6].

It is altogether necessary that we question the validity of the evolutionary development of written systems as established, for example, by Gelb[7] in his astute and extensive study in which he still subscribed to the notion of an evolutionary progression of mnemonic, semantic, logographic phonetic, syllabic, consonant systems. He regarded the existence of an Aztec mnemonic »script« as proof that a more highly developed form of script had not previously existed there. That the Maya script had failed to be deciphered, even though the language was known, was interpreted by Gelb as proof that this script was not phonetic and that the development of a phonetic script was unique to one place in the entire world. Today we now know that the Maya indeed used a phonetic script form and we are now beginning to be able to read it[9]. From this we can see that the phonetization of visual sign systems is not as unusual as hitherto assumed and that the development of script systems can also take reverse turns. Such reversibility prohibits us from speaking of evolution in the strict sense. Do phoneticized or rebus type gesture-systems exist which we are yet to discover? This would not seem entirely improbable to me. The evolutionary development of the written character takes place not only via depiction of the object but also via depiction of gesture. This consideration will perhaps initiate a movement towards a non-linear schematism of script development.

The following three examples should serve to demonstrate the achievements of expansive written culture and its institutional features.

1. The social transformation associated[9] with the transition to literate culture is based not only on the new organisation of knowledge and the spread of knowledge through writing, but also the possibilities which arise for the monopolization of knowledge through the spread of literacy. It is precisely this potential which is exploited by and lies behind the emergence of the power structures of the great Oriental Powers.

2. It is not the spread of literacy in itself but the specific social institutions (power, production and exchange structures) which avail of it, that initiate social transformation. Such institutions include, for example, scripted religion, the ruling apparatus of Great Powers as well as those of small republics, teaching institutions and trade by correspondence.

Without the spread of literacy it is doubtful that this great transformation, which was and continues to be the condition for the historical expansion of population, could have been achieved by these and other social institutions. Intercontinental exchange of resources, security and freedom from violence guaranteed by ruling powers and — particularly since modern times — the rapid expansion of technical knowledge are all unthinkable outside the context of developed and widespread literacy network[10].

3. The remarkable evolutionary progression associated with writing would seem to me less a question of the availability of symbolic systems — including those which provide an accurate grammatical and syntactical depiction of language — but of the development of a linguistic form from which **written language** evolves — a form of language which can clearly express in one word that which in oral speech requires further enquiry and visual demonstration. In order to be understood script or notation systems in oral culture rely on background information from oral tradition. In this context some societies, e.g. the Tuareg in North and West Africa, who have a phonetic script can be identified as an oral culture. The carved rod must be accompanied by a messenger (Australia), the content of the love letters or the inscription on cliff walls with navigation directions is decided upon in context — communication is never anonymous.

The unique nature of a developed culture of writing lies in the way in which **generally** applicable rules of comprehension emerge through the establishment of instructive and authoritative institutions, which even when divorced from the immediate situation, enable comprehension of the unfamiliar and unexpected.

As opposed to other human activities, such as eating or the exercising of violence, writing always presupposes a context of complex social organization. Script must be learnt. Standardization of script is a precondition for reader reception. Both must be embedded in stable social institutions, otherwise the chances for being understood are too low to compensate for the effort which goes into acquiring this skill. Hence social-scientific analysis must encompass literate culture as a social system and look beyond narrow uses of literacy. Institutions to be found in literate culture differ considerably from society to society. Here I am particularly interested in that — »expansive« — form of written usage which accommodates the rapid spread of technological information, the change in political forms and the differentiation of the fine arts. In this sense »expansive« can refer to several things:

1. An expansion of the proportion of the population which avails of written communication.

2. An increase in the number of social contexts which necessitate written communication (establishment of identity, law, literature etc.).

3. A reinforcement of a sense of history through the accumulation of documented knowledge (this is not an automatic procedure. The Tuareg use script exclusively for love letters and for writing instructions on cliffs to indicate the way in the desert).

4. The »literization«[11] of various forms of information (including those which are not articulated in oral culture).

As it would seem to me that these four instances of expansion of the use of writing are interconnected I use the term »expansive« in an undifferentiated sense as, in my estimation, all four interact through a system of positive interdependence.

In societies which undergo a process of rapid expansion of literacy it would seem characteristic that the institutions which encompass the use of script exhibit a distinctive binding structure — the registers of speech of oral written language which are specific to these institutions and the use of writing embody a kind of »sandwich« structure. Universities, Medresses (Islamic high schools) and law courts are examples of such institutions whose »sandwich-form« method of communication distinguishes itself from other forms of oral and written communication.

B What literate culture can potentially achieve

The spread of technical information

Technical information is also diffused in oral cultures. Admittedly this process is here a much slower one than in literate cultures. More important, however, is the fact that under certain conditions literization accomodates a far greater accumulation of information than is possible in oral cultures. In oral cultures technical information which is not of contemporary relevance is forgotten after several generations. The written form, however, enables its preservation.

An example from the oral tradition of European agricultural history can illustrate this. Agricultural methods employed in Central Europe in the early Middle Ages seem antiquated when compared with methods used by the Romans. Some techniques had been forgotten because reduced population density had rendered their use unnecessary. It was at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age that they were partially re-created and partially re-discovered (through the study of documents) and re-circulated through printed documents.

This diffiusion of information can only be achieved when institutions exist which initiate a stratification of experience and which function in the absence of face to face communication. Michael Giesecke has shown that this was not the case in the distribution of medical prescriptions in the Middle Ages[12]. The written recipes served as memory aids and possibly had a further communicative function. They were, however, incomprehensible unless accompanied by oral explanation.

A necessary condition for the rapid and widespread diffusion of information which we associate with written culture is the autonomous transmission of information. In the late Middle Ages and early modern age such institutions who functioned in the purely literate diffusion of information existed only in Byzantium, Islamic Spain and Jewish subculture. In other European cultures, as Giesecke clearly demonstrated for the spread of technical documentation in the German-speaking areas, these institutions first emerged with the advent of the printing press.

The diffusion of information about innovations is greatly facilitated when communication is also directed at anonymous addresses (above all in the printed form). A prerequisite of this is that the technological information acquires a distinctive economic character. It was / is implicit that the workshop secrets of the Middle Age tradesman and similarly the secret knowledge about medicinal herbs among the West African Vodun could / can be distributed in the workshop or within the Vodun group on a reciprocal basis and that external distribution only took / takes place on a commercial basis.

Whereas publication may involve payment of the author it does not bear comparison with the monetary compensation for loss of monopoly on information. Publication makes a valuable commodity, i.e. information, available to an anonymous public which, however, functions as an economic partner. Publication is seen as a contribution to the common good and to the general improvement of the (socio-)economic situation. Only within the framework of a general system of reciprocity can the author expect remuneration through norms set by similar activity on the part of other authors.

The potential anonymity of the author in print (who can conceal his identity by using a pseudonym) creates the danger of randomness and invalidity of conveyed information. As soon as such a doubt gains substance the flow of information can only continue under the condition that institutions exist or are created which »qualify« this information. These watch-dog institutions (in our society represented, for example, by editorial bodies, juries, academies and, in some respects, universities) are themselves dependent on oral communication.

Against this background of interaction of technological development and literization in European history touched upon here, the question arises to what extent development aid can succeed when this interrelation is ignored.

The economic rise of the few Asiatic threshold countries which have received development aid — for example Taiwan, Korea and some Indian states — loses its sensational dimension when it is related to the existence of an ancient written culture and an accompanying increase in literacy rate in these countries. The population historian Emanuell Todd[13] has shown that observed over a specific period of time literacy rates relate more directly than any other factor to economic development. This correlation becomes even more pronounced when high literacy rates are combined with relatively high social status of women. This would indicate that literacy among women (statistics for which are unfortunately not comprehensive) and the establishment of written culture within the context of familial socialization plays a key role.

According to Todd economic development is not the only effect of high literacy rates. Within a minimal lapse of time, mass persecution, civil wars and revolution also accompany a rise in literacy quotas. It would be premature to deduct a direct causal connection here. This observation does, however, serve to redirect the focus of our attention at this point. The outbreak of internal civic violence is often viewed as an expression of poverty, colonial oppression and underdevelopment. This, however, does not suffice to provide a

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plausible explanation, as similar sequences of spread of literacy and mass violence can be found in the history of independent European nations. A correlation could be seen in the way in which more widespread communication — made possible by script and printing — creates scope for projection of identities beyond the individual level embodied in such concepts as ethnicity, the building of religious communities and nationalism. At the same time the more widespread information network of more extensive markets arouses hopes of new »treasures« and new sources of revenue. The new (imaginary) collective identities and the competition for new sources of revenue do not inevitably give rise to the violent demarcation and competition but do, however, encourage it.

The multi-dimensional nature of written culture as touched upon here impedes an empirical examination of the relations between written culture and individual parameters, for example technological development.

Three further formative factors based on written culture which could account for technological development or its absence are the evolutionary correlation of variation and selection, the communicative context surrounding the market and technological competence.

Technological development in Europe did not result from the efforts of individual inventors but required considerable experimental variation. In abstract terms variation and systematic selection represent an essential precondition for technological development. It is banal, however, that written communication increases the extent of variation and the speed and stringency of selection. Selection and variation must be separate processes. If a technological solution is varied all other possible solutions cannot be sorted out simultaneously but must be kept in reserve as an alternative solution at the same or another location. The use of writing does not yet enforce this separation of variation and selection. It does, however, facilitate the multiplication of observations in autonomous development processes of this type so that the alternative attempt at finding a solution is preserved. Within a larger communicative context these conclusions can be united in a process of selection.

Development aid praxis adopts a singularly contrary stance towards this idea of the importance of technological evolutionary processes. Here administrative innovation is prevalent. »Par ordre de moufti« — for each problem one (and not more than one) solution is the standard approach. Characteristically the personnel in these innovative administrative bodies are labelled »experts« in all European languages. The modus operandi of these administrative innovations is certainly not devoid of meaning — the priority lies in the assertion of the self-esteem of those in charge and their advisors. This applies above all in those situations where the personnel is unfamiliar with the operative context (the foreign culture). Further factors must, however, be taken into account in order to explain why this administrative innovative approach continues to be persued despite its clearly limited degree of success.

Against the background of the importance of diffusion of innovation and accumulation of information using examples from European and Asian developments and in the contrast this shows with the administrative innovative approach of development aid, I have established that the importance of script for variation and selection is not a random but rather a systematic one. This is, however, an entirely abstract logical thesis as I have found no empirical evidence which separates variation and selection from other social processes which are related to the use of writing. The correlation between literacy and technological-economic development alone can be established empirically.

Technological innovations which involve processes more complicated than, for example, hand-operated water pumps, innovations, in other words, which involve inter-regional market structures with complicated delivery procedures often fail in the face of the dominance of venal influences over market procedures. Corrupt judges, for example, do not exactly foster trust in anonymous business partners. The more complicated the delivery and service procedures involved in obtaining new technology the greater the need for implicit trust in the functioning of the market. In the absence of trust in the binding nature of a contract it is impossible for complex technological innovations to become established and accepted, as no body of opinion exists to observe and control the market. The greater and more diffuse the scale of marketing procedures becomes, the more difficult it is to maintain social control over market operations by exclusively oral means of communication.

Hence the relationship between technological development and written culture operates on several levels. The conditions for communication within the market context are relevant for its success or failure at market level.

A further problem related to written culture lies in the allocation of technical competence. As a result of decades of scholarship programmes, technical competence in developing countries has meanwhile in quantitative terms, reached a barely adequate level. The allocation of competent personnel, however, is often based on calculations which do not favour the most efficient use of resources but rather more the accumulation of power. The filling of posts more often results from political and not economic and technical considerations.

The allocation of technical competence becomes a critical factor when it is limited to a small select group of experts. In Black Africa technical instruction is undertaken in foreign languages mastered only by a minority and which can only be learned at school. The semantic and grammatical structures necessary for the communication of certain technical processes are not available in the predominantly orally based vernacular. Few attempts at encouraging the development of such linguistic structures which would change this situation have been or are being made.

European linguistic history would seem to show parallels here. That Latin lost its prominence in the field of technology and the native tongues of the tradesmen, apprentices and skilled workers, i.e. those who employed and implemented new technology, were adopted would seem to me one of the decisive preconditions of technological progress in Europe.

Literacy and forms of political expression

That the relationship between literacy and power is a distinctive one, is assumed by most authors. Whether, however, literacy should be seen as an instrument of centralization or democratization (or more precisely: pluralization) is a point of contention. In my opinion literacy necessarily changes the modus of power structures. The facility of being able to reach others without personal presence, the possibility of being able to reach anonymous partners in communication, and to communicate not only in one's absence but also after death, and not least the opening of new registers of communication through the development of written language, furnish both centralizing and democratizing projections with means which cannot (or can only with considerable difficulty) be attained in the context of oral culture. In the course of a parallel evolution, »authoritarian« and »anti-authoritarian« intentions have at their disposal a forum for confrontation which enables increasing scope for manœuvre.

Subjection to authorities unknown to the individual is easier to achieve in literate culture than oral. This is not, however, an absolute difference. Social control exercised by anonymous authorities also occurs in oral cultures in the form of secret societies. Social control exercised by literate ruling powers is only effective when the ruler is assured of information sources and control over the communication itself within the administration. Access of authority to greater areas of control can become more direct given such reflexive control over a literate administration. A successful system of rule is, however, no longer immune to articulated social control from below, when writing also becomes the instrument of those subject to rule.

As John Markhoff[14] has shown in his detailed examination of the relation between alphabetization and forms of revolt in the 1798 French Revolution, literacy is a central factor for the development of articulate social protest. He could show that literacy did not effect the readiness to revolt but rather its form. The higher the proportion of literates in an area the more direct were attacks directed at central social institutions like land ownership, church and fiscal administration. Whereas in those areas where illiteracy was higher the proportion of such forms of action decreased and in its place the »great fear« (la grande peur) i.e. mobilization through rumour against putative dangers (invasion etc.) was more common.

Script and the development of art

The obvious coincidence between the rise of art and the development of literate culture can be explained by viewing written communication as a form of communication reduced to one channel. Because communication is reduced to one exclusive channel other channels of communication are free to become vehicles of other intentions. So-called verbal communication is never limited to the word as sole conveyor of information. It also involves facial expression and gestures and is influenced by the immediate surroundings.

The story-teller conveys his story not merely through the semantic content of the morpheme, as is the case in the printed novelle, but embellishes the content with facial expression and gesture. He structures his words using variety in tone and register of voice and speed of recitation. If the listener is acquainted with the conventions relating to the meaning of these signals — if he is able, for example, to recognize irony and innuendo from tone of voice and speed of recitation — a story which is being simultaneously conveyed on several informative levels is more dramatic in effect and, more precisely, more informative than any printed novelle.

Written communication alone is almost completely subject to semantic limitations. This is a considerable limitation which, however, accomodates concentration on highly specialized use of this channel of communication. The development of music in literate cultures is, in my opinion, inseparable from this aspect of literacy[15]. This could, however, result in the demise of perceptive facility for vocal range, facial expression and gesture — a form of »desensibilization« no longer regarded as a loss.

This, however, does not sufficiently account for the disappearance of purely oral genre in modern culture, as for example the Sicilian narrastoria. It is not so much competition from the printed novel which replaces the story-teller, but especially theatre, opera, film etc. The strength of these oral art forms lies in their combinative structure — the way in which they use script — (texts, [stage] direction, scores, choreography) to »refine« oral expression; this is »oral script-culture«.

In oral cultures painting is seldom exclusively aesthetic in function. It serves distinct communicative ends. In the Middle Ages the picture served its purpose not only in embodying aesthetic value but also in the emblematic portrayal of information. This factor determined the conception and organization of the picture's content[16] and also limited the aesthetic possiblities. It was first with the early bourgeois revolutions (which were far more effective as cultural revolutions than as initiators of socio-economic change) that freer forms of composition, for example naturalism with its expressive portrayal of emotion and perspective, became possible (see for example Breughel and Dürer). Relieved of the burden of conveying symbolic meaning the painting could take on new communicative roles.

As the painting was no longer required to »speak«, and as it could now be »explained« in written exegesis or by »instructors« from paraliterate institutions, symbolic communication could now become more complex. Visual art has become to a greater extent informative and complex in its descriptions. Appropriate institutionally backed approval can elevate the picture to an »accurate portrayal« — the artist's signature becomes its guarantee.

C The social organization of communication in oral cultures

We very often have a false impression of the organization of communication in non-literate cultures. This impression springs from the part of our social existence which we label as the »everyday«[17]. The speech registers and genres of oral literature (which exist even in our society e.g. the joke) can be mixed and combined with relative ease. This we call everyday communication. Oral communication in oral cultures is more complex. It contains an extensive variety of relatively rigid genres and registers. Among the West African Ayizo, for example the speaker is always conscious of the difference between the seventeen genres which exist in the oral literature. A system of classification also exists which defines the persons and situations to whom and in which the use of specific genres is permissible.

In oral culture the storage of information is facilitated by memory[18]. This is less banal than may seem, as memory is also subject to a complex system of social organisation. That which is to be memorized is divided among different individuals with distinct tasks; control mechanisms regarding the safeguarding of that which has been memorized are essential (it must therefore be memorized several times by several people). It is also important that the role of memorizer be rewarded by a high level of social prestige and that »forgetting« must also be sanctioned. This necessitates considerable socio-structural organization. The composition of personal memos as occurs in early forms of literacy would, by comparison, appear to be a less complex affair.

Viewed from this perspective, literate culture would seem to have an advantage in terms of simplicity. However, it is not necessarily advantageous to develop a typology of cultural transformation from »complex to simple«, reversing former functionalist perspectives, as the preservation of this advantageous »simplicity« necessitates (as I will later show) a considerable degree of institutional organization (for processes of learning and maintenence of standards)[19].

Using examples from the fields of conceptual system, genealogy, myth and the social position of the bard, I should now like to demonstrate the organizational complexity involved in the storage of knowledge.

The organization of memory in oral culture is of a particularly economic nature. A differentiated terminology is developed where the process of (re)production necessitates reduction. On the pacific island of Lesu, for example, there are some twelve concepts representing the pigs whereas the irrelevant is not named. Malinowski demonstrates this also for the inhabitants of the Trobiand island where this applies not only to naming but also to the development of comprehension categories in general. General abstractions and concrete social forms are conceptually combined in a very economical way[20]. In the language of the Fon in West Africa, for example, the word »acɛ«, which we translate as power, is combined with »magical influence« when the possession of »acɛ̀« is being described, and with »command« when one speaks in the more mundane sense of »expression of power« (kp'acɛ̀).

In oral cultures the historical report often serves simultaneously to instruct about existing social order, (dangerous) forms of behaviour, potential natural resources etc. We might here compare oral tradition with a holographic mirror. The outcome of this, however, is that the alteration of one single piece of information necessitates changing the entire information structure. Hence a new social order essentially results in a change in genealogy[21].

Myth is an important means of storing information for many cultures. It is remarkably suited to the method of storage employed by the human brain which works by a system of association. Old mnemonics demonstrate the two forms this storage takes: the spatial projection and the ongoing report (the typical mnemonic recommendation being to furnish a house with those things to be remembered or use them to form a story with episodic sequences). Myth provides entire landscapes and unifies episodes meaningful in themselves into a narrative structure whose order is partially based on a consequential logic. Considerable reserves of social information can be stored when ordered into spatial projections or narrative structures in this way. The areas whose information is stored in the form of myth varies from society to society. When myth is conceived in this way as form of storing knowledge, the functional nature of mythical forms of representation becomes clear. It affords the possibility of coherent storage of knowledge in the form of associative memory, based on spatial and narrative structures, which is more effective than abstract listing.

It is illustrative here to compare the associative storing of knowledge of oral culture with one of the storage techniques of literate culture — that of the storing of abstract lists in texts. The strengths of this system lie in the uncomplicated way in which information can be retrieved, the lack of ambiguity and the extensive storage capacity. It must be said, however, that written storage capacity is not superior to that of the human brain in every aspect but only so in the case of a large quantity of similar, easily confused but not directly connected facts.

Both forms of storage are mutually exclusive for one type of culture. Memorizing of abstract lists also occurs in oral literature and literate cultures remain dependent on associative memory. An initial phase of memorizing by associative memory always precedes the development of techniques of abstract listing. Different cultures show different preferences when chosing between these modes of memorizing. This explains the preponderance of associative thinking in oral cultures.

The social organization of oral tradition

The choice of the bard, whose role involves the handing on of tradition, is not a random one in oral culture. Specific areas of knowledge have an individual bard designated to them[22]. These positions are subject to stringent social control as it must be guaranteed that the chain of tradition is not broken. They are at the same time, however, positions of considerable social prestige. The bards at the seat of the King of Fon of Abomey (a West African class society), who could interpret history and had to sing the abbrievated litany of the names of all former kings, were among the most respected court officials. One single mistake in the singing of the litany, however, cost them their heads. The efficiency of this traditional system is remarkable. The report of the conquest of the port town of Ouidah in 1724 was in this way preserved word by word into this century[23].

Such a professional approach is not to be found in all oral societies. The preservation of funds of social knowledge is also carried out by awarding of prestige and meting of punishment. In Ayizo society in modern day Bénin[24] knowledge of oral tradition does not necessarily involve the attainment of formal status. In the Vodun »religion«, pharmacological and religious knowledge is subject to strictly formal control. Only those in possession of specific knowledge may become priests and only priests and Vodun-servants may have specific knowledge. The political organization of this (predominantly acephalous) ethnic group demonstrates a more informal distribution of status as prestige equivalent for outstanding mastering of the oral tradition[25].

The literization of knowledge from oral tradition can hence nullify the material basis for the bard's social prestige. Thus this does not take place without meeting some resistance and hence presupposes social change. In this way the bards on the Indonesian island of Roti[26] were rendered superfluous by competition from the Christian priests. It was common to restrict potential competition from the new mode of communication. Prospective Vodun priests of the above mentioned Ayizo and other ethnic groups in South Bénin were not permitted to attend school.

Given suitable organizational structures within an oral culture, it is possible to store immense reserves of knowledge. The limits have been reached, however, when specialists are required to memorize who should memorize what!

D Conversion to literacy and the institutional framework of literate society

Credibility

Script which aims at serving as more than an oracle script or mnemonic aid and which also mediates between anonymous partners faces the problem of credibility. Members of literate cultures automatically assume that written texts are equally as credible as spoken. The written word is, in fact, viewed with a greater degree of credulity — »It's there in black and white«. This credibility is not inherent in the medium itself. It must be first be established by social institutions. In the predominantly illiterate cultures of Africa this credibility of the written word does not exist. By virtue of its anonymity (one cannot know who really wrote it) it enjoys lesser credibility than the same author's oral communication. Credibility is determined by the institution from which the communication originates. Particularly lacking in credibility in Africa today are often those texts whose author is identifiable as the state. Communication from a state which tries to introduce measures inadequately disguised in empty »common good« rhetoric, whose pointless nature is usually obvious when subject to the scrutiny of knowledge based on rural experiences, and which subsequently in the implementation allows the material interests of individual public servants to dominate, can hardly be deemed credible[27].

Whereas in oral culture personal experience of the credibility of the speaker determines whether information from a particular source is respected, in literate culture the possibility (but not the necessity) exists of guaranteeing the value of information, independent of experience, by institutional structure. When the adoption of information is divorced from experience, considerable flexibility in the reporting and selection of elements of information emerges. The standards and interests of the institutions responsible for the evaluation of information become decisive in determining what is accepted in terms of information. The way for spreading of ideologies is also paved by these means. Thus, the transition to literate culture and the rationalization of world pictures cannot automatically be viewed as one process.

Historically, sacral institutions and institutions guaranteeing ownership rights seem to have had considerable influence in affording credibility. It would seem to me that in modern times with immense quantities of information being made available, competition between different institutions plays an important role in the possible evaluation of information. Individual or conversation-based comparison of experience or truths regarded as axiomatic, lead to a competitive situation in which individual bodies (science, media etc.) evolve. This dynamic process cannot occur if the administrators of the written word in the teaching caste of Gurus or Marabouts »cartellize« (or monopolize) written treatment of knowledge and questions of truth and thus eliminate the forces of comparison, evaluation and competition[28].

Digression: heterodoxy and criticism

As soon as the credibility of written or printed texts becomes the object of evaluation, the outcome can lead to the elimination of texts and also the formation of groups around the texts which have been sorted in this way with heterodoxy as an ultimate result.

Harold Turner[29] demonstrates this using the difference in treatment of opposing points of view in the traditional regions of Nigeria and the new (Aladura-) churches. In oral culture the unfixed nature of the word accomodates the continual harmonization of the *status quo* and the portrayal of past events. The literization and canonisation of ritual texts impedes this conformity and hence gives rise to the phenomenon of heresy hitherto unknown in Africa's traditional religions. Of particular relevance here is the story of the native Aladura churches in Nigeria. The canonisation of a religious doctrine in combination with the announcement of general access to this information met with the opposition of those who regarded themselves as protectors of the holy truth. The Aladura churches split up into several groups which accuse each other of heresy.

This leads to the problem of the social establishment of the discursive form of »criticism«. By the discursive form of »criticism« I refer to the creation of an oral or written genre which requires no enforced consensus within the context of a communicative situation of ritual. Criticism is a genre which, despite its negative nature i.e. the rejection of information as irrelevant, is regarded as a necessary condition for progress in the realm of knowledge. Havelock and Goody see the establishment of this discursive form »criticism« as a central contribution of written culture. This view is supported by the fact that criticism in oral cultures necessitates that the object of criticism be made public. It must be given public exposure or else declared public by an institution — an oracle, for example. It would seem that criticism cannot be divorced from the necessity of a relevant informative chain.

Street[30] strongly criticized Havelock and Goody's position. He grounds his criticism in reference to Turton's examination of the political rhetoric of the Mursi in Ethiopia. Criticism as an established form of political rhetoric actually exists in this oral culture. Street neglects, however, to quote Turton where he mentions that an establishment of consensus always takes place at the end of meetings. This enforced establishment of consensus is not, however, to be found in the insulting (and critical) songs of the Ayizo. Hence oral cultures are familiar with criticism criticism as a genre which exists under certain conditions. In both cases however, criticism is aimed at personal behaviour and not general areas of social experience. My observations of the Ayizo indicate that doubts expressed about questions of social experience are always interpreted as attacks on instances of authority and power. Decisions about truth are closely akin to power and trials of strength. This can also be the case in written culture. In the Indian Guru and North African Marabout systems only the priestly caste are authorized in the transmission of written knowledge. The authority of the teacher is greater than that of the text. Criticism only establishes itself as a legitimate form of discourse when the differentiation of power and truth, the recognition of plural standpoints and the written definition coincide. Only when this form of discourse has been established can select accumulation of information in the place of drowning in an indiscriminate flood of information become a realistic alternative for those in search of knowledge.

Homogenous linguistic area and standardization

The stability of the use of writing as a medium also depends on the scale of the audience one's communication can reach. Natural language tends strongly towards regional variation and hence places limitations on large-scale communication. The investive outlay for the printing press would not be profitable given such conditions, as the printed book is a commodity essentially subject to restraints imposed by the economies of scale. Hence an essential precondition for the revolution instigated by the printing press was the interregional development of homogeneous or standardized script. Standard language is, however equivalent to spoken language in few places if at all. It is a product of consciousness, not only functionally interpreted, but also ideologically motivated social practice.

Written texts rarely open to completely unambiguous interpretation. This creates a problem as immediate enquiry is seldom possible and the written context is not always equivalent to that of reading. In order to cope with this ambiguity interpretative conventions are arranged (or dictated) and institutions created which are responsible for the spread of such conventions (and possibly also for adherence to the latter). In a letter for example the word »you« is open to interpretation. The naming of the addressee can clarify this. It is when such conventions are established, and only then, that texts can be created which address an undefined readership. The interpretative role of the reader necessitates guidelines and limitation of the multiple possibilities for interpretation. Reading instructions and above all the establishment of genres can achieve this. Admittedly only the experienced or specifically educated reader can benefit from genre identification. Other conventions also become stable and homogenous by this process: e.g. conventions as to the labelling of pictures (text above, below or at the side of picture), the grammatic structures developed for the titles etc.[31]

Linguistic development and the evolution of written language into a cultural system

By developed literate cultures I am referring to cultures in which linguistic progress can be seen to have taken place and whereby processes of differentiation and specialization have become established which are necessitated only by written and not by oral use. (Written language is a special term used here in the narrow sense of a distinct, codified linguistic form.) The survival of written language cannot be guaranteed without suitable institutional backup. Giesecke emphasizes this by describing written language and its context as a technological system[32]. Whether one employs the label »technological« or »cultural« here is secondary to the implicit argument that written language and its institutional context can only be analysed when approached as a coherent system and not a purely linguistic phenomenon.

The necessity of a supply of relevant reading material is a further precondition for stability. I do not wish to go into this question here although alphabetization practice in the Third World often neglects this factor (the literization of normative information, technical information and traditional knowledge which embodies the group's identity seem to merit central focus in such programmes).

Linguistic development involves a simultaneous availability of possibilities (but not necessities) for the determination and differentiation of certain types of reflection which are central to the logic of technological innovation.

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The desire to create a written language can be observed as characteristic of the German literacy process and also possibly of others. Apart from the interest in developing a functional script-system for specific social purposes, interest also existed in developing written language as a relevant entity in itself[33].

Causal and conditional forms of expression are also possible within purely spoken language. These are, however, very variable in terms of sense. Context and interrogation are required to attain the exact meaning. The conjugation »and then«[34] tends to predominate. The precise meaning of the exact relations in complex associations is achieved through dialogue. Written instruction which is still embedded in the oral tradition represents a simulation of instructive dialogue[35]. The manifold variety of possibility which exists in real dialogue is not available here; specific student queries cannot be anticipated. That which in oral dialogue represents the specific enquiry can be replaced in written language by the sedimentation of causal and conditional forms of argumentation.

When conditional and causal structures with strictly defined meanings replace »and then, and then, and then« liasing of narrative units, a new dimension in the instruction and spreading of information emerges. The option of oral expression to leave a statement open increases the options for interpretation open to the listener. Conditional and causal structures (subordinate clauses, prepositional and adverbial modifiers etc.) imitate this facility of dialogue — the narrative is embellished by subsidiary strains. These subsidiary strains in argumentation are, however, more limited and more selective in terms of meaning. A definite statement which can easily be shown to be false replaces the random »and then« asociation. It is precisely this factor, which unconducive to the communicator, opens opportunities for the selection of information. It could be that the subordinate causal and conditional clauses (hypotaxis) are a specific feature of written language. This is suggested by the results of Hildegard Hoftmann's[36] research which shows that for the West African Fongbé language hypotaxis exists only in translations of the Bible and the Fongbé-French mix (»Fonçais«) spoken by intellectuals.

The asides consisting of causal and conditional clauses common to written expressions are always more precise — even in never-ending sentences — than a dialogue initiated discourse.

As opposed to instructive oral explication, written communication necessitates a development of the facility for spatial definition. In written communication it is not possible to give instruction such as »that over there« by raising an index finger from the page. Spatial conception must therefore be transformed into a more abstract code which is independent of context. Articulated conception of space can subsequently be connected with logical operators. Spatial conception is not necessarily stored by linguistic definition whereas logical operators are. A necessary condition for mathematical reflection is first fulfilled when both of these modes of reflection are combined into a unified code.

Written communication demands an articulation of parts of knowledge »which one grasps / (conceives)« (motoric knowledge) and »which one sees« (visual knowledge)[37]. If we try to articulate the function of a corkscrew we are confronted with the problem of verbalizing something which we conceive. This form of language independent of visual communication is an important factor in telephone and radio communication.

Motoric, visual and also other forms of knowledge (e.g. olefactory and emotional) are transferred into a unified code by written language. The articulation of sensory perception unfolds new dimensions in metaphoric expression which is not unimportant for the development of literature. The common linguistic code for the different forms of experience enables their linkage and the new recombination of elements originally stored separately. It provides opportunities for technological development. A »scripting« divorced from this linguistic development, which merely involved the transcription of oral texts, could not achieve this.

Ridiculousness of elevated styles and the quest for prestige

As a result of linguistic development written language becomes more long-winded than the spoken word. This laboriousness can express itself in the ridiculousness of elevated style. The erudite languages such as Medieval Latin, Sanscrit, Rabbi-Hebraic and Mandarin-Chinese distinguished those who used them even in everyday contexts. Ong and Schlaffer[38] regard these specialized languages as an instrument of the erudite in their exclusive elevation and monopolization of knowledge. It is possible that this is **also** a function of specialized language. Apart from this, however, some of these languages present **elaborate written forms** which can operate beyond the range of the local vernacular. The closer written and colloquial forms are in terms of similarity of expression, the more clearly the laboriousness of written language is exhibited. If, instead of having to wait on whether or not a question is raised and to find out the direction this will take, explicative or conditional background is anticipated by causal and conditional clauses, the entire statement takes on the form of a monologue. The reader is then subject to two expectations. Firstly to be able to reconstruct the potential interrogative stance on which the subordinate clause is based and at the same time to manage not to lose track of the main argument.

Long causal or conditional hypotactic sentences in the place of the uncomplicated »and then« form and conceptual differentiation in structural expression (instead of »I feel, I mean«: »seemingly, apparently, probably, likely, perhaps«) are essentially laborious. Precision often automatically exists by virtue of the situative context of the spoken word or can easily be attained by direct question-ing. The use of adverbs of place and expressions which denote movement where visual demonstrations is also possible demands of the listener activation of perhaps seldom used vocabulary and is more detailed than the use of the word »so« combined with a gesture.

This exposes written language to the immanent and inescapable danger of absurdity. This problem arises in every culture. It is a theme which frequently emerges in the initial introductory phases of literacy (see the »Dottore« figure in the Commedia dell'arte[39]). Criticism of alleged or real monopolization of knowledge and strategies for upholding status by linguistic means are often interwoven with criticism of the laboriousness of the written account.

If the written language is forced out of the oral context as a result of its reduced efficiency, and the charges of absurdity based on this and other factors, purely mechanical exercises are not sufficient to preserve its capacity for linguistic development and it is unable to continue in its specific contribution to the translation of motoric and visual knowledge and the precision of conjunctional structures. Written language and use of writing (understood as one entity) only remain stable when the institutions of oral culture with a literate base are created around it. Religious rituals such as Bible and Koran readings and exegesis and educative rituals such as disputation and examination are potential examples for such »paraliterate institutions« which could create stability for the written form. Goody sees this from another perspective, he regards such institutions as residues of an oral culture[40]. I would like to argue, however, that these institutions are essentially innovations and the proof of this argument lies in what they actually initiate. In my opinion their achievements lie in the standardization of the written word, the awarding of prestige for those subcultures which embody and develop written language, and in the development of new registers of spoken language. That standardization is a precondition for the existence of widespread linguistic communities has already been established above. This standardization can be attained by educational establishments with self-recruiting teaching staff (i.e. universities), by periodicals (e.g. The Times), by dictionaries (Duden, OED, Petit Robert) by religious texts (the Bible, Koran) etc. The normative authority of these instances must be institutionalized.

The establishment of literary genres which enjoy an elevated status (possibly fulfilled by one »holy« text) and prestigious social institutions such as universities and Medresses (Koran Schools) can protect written language from the pitfalls of absurdity.

In these institutions, written language is not only read and written but above all spoken. New registers for linguistic culture emerge here such as the lesson (eccl), the sermon and the lecture. Hence literacy does not necessarily reduce the linguistic culture of a given society of existing registers, it can also introduce new registers. These registers remain, even when subject to oral usage, the domain of written language.

Institutions whose most noticable achievement was initially the awarding of prestige for mastery of written language, which protected it from absurdity, then attain through the development of specific discursive forms, greater possibilities for the classification and use of knowledge enshrined in the written word.

Administration

Literate administration affords the administrator autonomy in his use of the time at his disposal. This is obvious to anyone whose work pattern has ever been disturbed by telephone and personal callers. The literization of administration accomodates the setting of priorities and the sequential ordering of tasks. With similar expenditure in terms of personnel, the likelihood of actually reaching one's partner in communication is far greater than in literate than in oral administrations. The pre-colonial Kingdom of Dahomé in West Africa, which is comparable with small modern developing countries in terms of its economic activity (mainly slave trade) and territorial controls, reached the limit in terms of personnel expenditure feasible for a centralized administration despite the use of a nonverbal statistics system, as an identical number of control personnel had to be employed to watch over the activities of the actual administrative staff[41].

Literacy accomodates social control within an administration which can originate from very different sources. Control in the form of orders from hierarchically removed superiors is one possibility, as is also control exerted by the »administered« through the Administrative Court or the press.

It is characteristic in impoverished developing countries (and, alas, some European university faculty administrations), that the role of the written word in administrative affairs is merely a symbolic one. Decisions are taken only as part of a process of social exchange. This practice forces an attitude towards administration which in French-speaking West Africa is known as »suivre le dossier« (lit. »follow the file«) i.e. the written process must be reinforced by personal intervention. Time and efficiency gains are thereby lost. Within such a context it is therefore only necessary for the citizen to learn written language in so far as it is used as an instrument of harassment in mainly orally conducted administrative proceedings.

In oral communication the dictates of politeness force interruption of other tasks and attendance to the addressor. No social sphere can reject a certain minimal observance of these rules — not even administration. Rules of procedure which necessitate the written process can, however, be dispensed with without causing the collapse of social communication. However, as soon as written communication merely operates as an option accompanying oral communication, the latter gains the upper hand. This means that literate administration can only become a permanent structure if the principle of written communication is protected from the competetive influence of the spoken word. On the other hand an administration based on written procedure also necessitates a degree of lateral or cross-communication — a communication which works to unite differing sources of information. This can be seen to function as a controlling force and also creates a precondition for innovation. Cross-communication can arise from contacts arising in informal contexts e.g. sport and other social activities which are not subject to official restraint.

If — as in the case of some developing countries — the effort which goes into the formulation of written regulations and procedures is only productive in establishing routine or autonomy of time division by accident rather than design because texts fail to meet with any reaction, the conditions for the efficacy of literate administration remain unfulfilled. In these cases other administrative routines establish themselves. A return to the former position is then only possible through renewal of institutional rules regarding the use of written form within the administration.

The »sandwich« nature of script systems — oral and written communication as examples of innovative systems

Oral (mainly derived from written language) and written communication relate to each other in an obligatory fashion. It is only in this combination that the relevant institutions can be effective. This combinative character could be illustrated using several examples of which I have chosen to examine a particularly successful system of technological innovation.

Louk Box compared innovative agricultural processes in the Netherlands and the Dominican Republic[42]. He demonstrated convincingly (with supportive evidence from empirical studies in other countries) that the force behind the success of the Dutch agricultural innovations was based on institutional informality and that in comparison bureaucratic »rural extension systems« are essentially less efficient. It is thus probable to observe the relationship between the spoken and written word within this framework of »institutionalized informality« from what emerges from the findings of Box. What we find here can be termed as a »sandwich-structure«.

This »institutionalized informality« comprises of the following three elements — state research institutions which compile written research protocol for internal use, scientific publications for the exchange of information between research institutions and as a forum for criticism of research findings and organized discussion with farmer's study groups, the structure of which is set down in writing. Regional research institutions with an implementation bias employ the same methods of communication but with different emphasis. In the national organizations for producers, conversation held at meetings dominates over written communication. The structure of the organization is, however, defined in written communication in the form of elections, information about meetings and addresses. The latter source is useful in that it is integrated into a written context of telephone books, road signs, maps and timetables. Whoever has worked in a developing country where the latter sources of information do not exist knows that trying to establish who knows what about where demands so much time and effort on the part of the questioner and the questioned that the search for information costs at least double the effort than under normal conditions. It is hence clear that direct demonstration with its facility for establishing links and direct conversation (partially conducted in written language) for the way in which it accomodates immediate inquiry are an efficient aid to those with a command of script and written language. Thus, down to the individual farmer's personal memos, oral communication is here integrated into a network in which it alternates with written procedure.

In a similar way Schlieben-Lang[43] has analysed the binding nature of written communication as a condition for its effectiveness within a process of social innovation — the French Revolution. Recitation of written documents (reading aloud) and written recording of the spoken word (minute taking) are necessarily components in the processes of political agitation and discussion. They render the written form effective. »The establishment of the written is paradoxically dependent on methods and communicative networks which essentially belong to the oral sphere.«

Further above in an introductory comment, I defined the organization of social memory in oral cultures as complex and in contrast the storage of information in written form as a more simple procedure. We have come to recognize the fragility of the cultural system based on script/written language as a system which necessitates stability which is achieved by the creation of institutions. These institutions seem to exhibit a characteristic binding structure. In a »sandwich-like« form they link the oral and written use of written language. I am hence unable to agree with the theory that institutionalized use of oral language together with the use of written texts represents a legacy from written culture. A developed and efficiently used written language, which is subject to continuous »care« (reproduction and innovation) necessitates such combinative structures.

E Alternatives to script in predominantly illiterate developing countries

World-wide application of structured models of state administration and integration into international markets created a hiatus between the model of social organization which necessitates use of writing for the ability for self correction and the illiteracy of the masses in those countries where written culture failed to develop. This tense relationship led to the development of several institutional and technical substitutions for written usage which I shall briefly mention here as they cannot be understood in terms of their inefficiency if they are not seen as emerging parallel to the development of written culture.

As an example of institutional substitution I would like to examine »animation rurale/rural extension«. The majority of personnel engaged in development aid are active in the field of »rural consultancy«. This exhibits the characteristic innovation modus of administrative innovation (as discussed above). Field work analysed and undertaken on this phenomenon does not exactly speak for its success. The following two examples illustrate this clearly. In the past 70 years, since the beginning of colonial rule, a chain of misguided agricultural projects led to a negative conditioning of the farmers in certain West African regions. Ann O'Hear[44] shows how farmers in Ilorin (Northern Nigeria), initially enthusiastic about high yielding varieties of rice, were transformed into sceptics. In the end the standard reaction of farmers to every attempt at intervention became that of rejection. In his study »Indigenous Agricultural Revolutions« in Sierra Leone, Paul Richards[45] could show that success in agricultural development among African farmers is based on a high degree of variation and an extensive pool of genes. They arose in opposition to the explicit plans of the rural extension workers.

The continued application of rural extension as a means of changing the agricultural structure cannot be explained in terms of the success of this system of spreading information. Concepts such as »target group«, »campaign against drought« and the structure of individual plans would indicate that agricultural development is being pursued in the mode of warlike strategy which has been successful in its application in other social spheres. In this context, however, this would appear to be an inappropriate approach as in its nature as a process involving adaptive processes between man and environment, agricultural development necessitates more autopoietic, self-organized structures such as those which can be initiated in the context of a written culture.

There is a widespread belief that literacy is no longer a necessary goal in the Third World as communication with electronic media has become more efficient and can function without the use of script (this does not apply to the use of computers and neglects also the importance of the printed programme). Development aid programmes sponsored by European countries consequently spend more on television and radio than on literacy programmes.

Communication by audio-cassettes, radio, video and television embodies three characteristic differences to printed communication. Firstly, speed of reception is slower. Read aloud, the text of a page of newspaper requires approx. 20 minutes. Secondly the introduction of titles, tables of contents and other aids creates varied possibilities for selection. It is not necessary for the reader in search of specific information to read the entire text in its existing order — as the radio listener must — until he reaches the section of interest to him. Thus within the same period of time this possibility of selection enables the reader to quickly attain far more specific information than the listener and without being impeded by the storage of unnecessary supplementary knowledge.

Thirdly, given the important precondition of freedom of the press, the printed media make a greater degree of interactive communication possible than electronic media. On the basis of their technical installation the electronic media are the favoured medium of dictators. The president speaks and no one can answer. The possibility of reply is limited even in the use of cassettes (face to face communication is admittedly more interactive). In the prohibition of speech the strength of the written media becomes apparent. In terms of the technical conditions they are clearly more suited to subversive activity than any other alternatives. The printed word saved Europe's democratic potential in times of crises with even greater efficacy than orally communicating secret organizations.

There is no scarcity of attempts made to substitute pictograms for script. Non-specialists often assume that comprehension of pictures is something more »natural«. Ethnographic reports (including my own observations in Northern Bénin in 1972) show that even the interpretation of photographs can be an impossible task for illiterates. The introduction of the picture frame as an artificial horizon, the abstraction of space and movement (and also the movement of the observer) make the photograph into a completely different conveyor of information than as perceived by natural observation. This is even more strongly applicable to drawings which reduce information content through abstraction. The interpretation of pictures and symbols necessitates an educative process which is no less complex than the mastering of script even if children usually learn it before learning to write.

An example from my own fieldwork in Bénin in 1984 should serve to illustrate this. European doctors who tried to communicate with illiterate midwifes using pictograms naturally assumed that they were already familiar with the concepts of line and column. The midwifes were supposed to enter on the line in which a symbol was depticted (eye, foot etc.) in the first, second or third column the result of the examination of circulation in the eyelid or swelling of the foot as observed in the first, second or third examination.

The concepts of line and column are, however, not natural principles. They follow the principle of script in historical order as is the case in all instructive programmes. Hence it is not surprising that the midwifes who had never been to school spread their answers all over the page guided only by aesthetic considerations. Then the doctors requested that diagnostic questions be merely answered by yes or no. Here a further dimension of the doctors' cultural background was brought into play. In this oral culture (Baseda) the answer to the question »Is the foot swollen« takes the form of a complete sentence and encompasses a statement on the general state of health of the patient. The linguistic pattern of question plus yes / no answer is not a common one in illiterate acephalous societies. Some sectors of the population have become acquainted with it through the introduction of military service and centralized state policing. Women to whom the obligations of military service and tax declaration do not apply, can avoid these situations more easily than men and are not forced to learn this special linguistic pattern. Regardless of whether this yes / no principle is a familiar one to answer such an important question with a yes / no reply is regarded as highly impolite.

The question – answer routine which aims at answers which do not involve further questions would seem to me the invention of state defined (written) culture. As a result of the redundance of direct dialogue in written communication, questions must be limited so that answers are kept within a predictable informative scope. These complexities were not apparent to the midwifes and the doctors. The midwifes reacted »politely« and tried to convey more than »yes« or »no«. They interpreted the pictogram symbols for yes and no as meaning well and sick. As the yes / no-questions had a different significance for the state of health of the pregnant women depending on the month of pregnancy (for example in questions about the heartbeat or position of the child) the answers conveyed in the symbols must have been rather confusing for the doctors trying to decipher them.

This failure of communication by pictogram strengthened my doubt that in the absence of written culture this form of communication could be employed to convey more complex information in written form unaccompanied by oral explanation.

The electric media and pictograms can take over some of the functions of script. They do not in themselves make specific processes of communication possible which can support an autonomous technological development and a functionally differentiated interregional market society.

Conclusion

We have here touched upon the institutional complexity of the organization of social memory in oral cultures. There existed or exists here an organized force which opposes the transformation to literate culture.

Based on this account the main difference between oral and literate cultures can be seen to lie, not in the latter's mastery of script forms, but a) in the existence of a technologically developed written language which can also be used to give expression to hitherto unarticulated forms of information, and b) in the existence of institutions which stabilize the use of language in spoken and in written form. In keeping with this view it is not appropriate to define all societies who use writing as literate cultures. This could explain the failure of literacy programmes which lack the backup of a social process of literization.

This observation of literate culture from institutional perspective also has implications for a theory of social development. The use of writing in our everyday context is an »unlikely«[46] event unless first subject to normalization by specific institutions. Normalization by the »unlikely« can also be described as evolution, irrespective of whether or not this »unlikely« force is welcome. Only if written language is embedded in specific social institutions can new options for the development of social structures be created through the process of literization.

Notes

1 Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, Cambridge 1977. Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Cambridge, Mass. 1963. Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, Frankfurt 1984, S. 216-255. Havelock stressed above all the unique connection between literacy and culture in Greece. He did not pay sufficient attention to other literate cultures and subsequently misvalued their relevance. Goody (*Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge 1968) was the first to integrate bounteous ethnographic material about literacy devoid of written culture in the construction of a comparative theory on the question of the difference between written culture and traditional culture. It was Niklas Luhmann who first defined society in terms of the organization of communication, thereby developing a theoretical framework for the analysis of the difference between written and oral culture. After Luhmann a subsidiary treatment of the technical importance of other media is no longer sufficient in the analysis of social change, the organization of communication must be analysed as a decisive condition. For an account of current developments in research on this topic see Florian Coulmas and Konrad Ehlich (eds.), *Writing in Focus*, Berlin 1983. Aleida and Jan Assmann and Christof Hardmeier (eds.), *Schrift und Gedächtnis*, München 1983. Helmut Glück, *Schrift und Schriftlichkeit*, Stuttgart 1987. I found here a particularly enlightened critical analysis of Havelock's overestimation of the efficiency of the Greek alphabet in comparison to others (p. 268).

2. The development of this theory would not have been possible without extensive cooperation and discussion with Michael Giesecke. The discussion and exchange of research conclusions with Peter Probst also helped in the refinement of my arguments. An earlier version of this paper benefitted from discussion with students in my Bielefeld and Berlin seminars — Elisabeth Boesen and Werner Butz are named here as representing all contributors to those discussions. Hartmann Tyrell and Rudoph Stichweh's detailed criticism helped me in the reconstruction of the logical structure of my argumentation, the reworking of certain details and the abandonment of others. For helpful references, I would also like to thank Michel Ahohounkpanzon, Mohamed Arkoun, Aldo Benini, Till Förster, Helmut Glück, Dirk Kohnert, Werner Kummer, Niklas Luhmann, Peter Scheibert and Angelika Tunis. The tranquil surroundings of the Centre for Advanced Studies, Berlin and the efficient backup of Frau Monigatti's secretariat were a source of great support in the actual writing of the text. Observations from work on the research project »The effects of Development Aid in Rural West Africa«, financed by the Volkswagen Foundation and undertaken with Thomas Bierschenk, Till Förster and Dirk Kohnert, have also been used here.

3. The fact that despite a lack of success in agricultural projects, development aid policies such as »animation rurale« and »rural extension«, which tend to in-

timidate rather than inform the farmers, continues to operate, can be explained by the hiatus which exists between literate administration and oral rural culture.

4. For an example of such specific historical study see Francois Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire. L'alphabétisation des Français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, Paris 1977. Michael Giesecke, Schriftsprache als Entwicklungsfaktor, in: Sprach- und Begriffsgeschichte, in: Reinhard Koselleck (ed.), *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1979, pp. 262 - 302. Also by the same author: »Schriftsprachenerwerb und Erstlesedidaktik in der Zeit des 'gemein teutsch'«, in: *OBST*, 11 1979, pp. 48 - 72. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order. Reading and Writing in Tudor or Stuart England*, Cambridge 1980.

On Sumer, see Beatrice Andre-Leicknam and Christiane Ziegler (eds.), *Naissance de l'écriture — cunéiformes et hieroglyphes*, Paris 1982 and Denise Schmand-Besserat, Tonmarken und Bilderschrift, in: *Das Altertum*, 31, 2, 1985, pp. 76 - 82. On Egypt see Wolfgang Schenkel, Wozu die Ägypter eine Schrift brauchten, in: Assmann (see footnote 1), pp. 45 - 63. Jan Assmann presents a different perspective in the essay »Schrift, Tod und Identität. Das Grab als Vorschule der Literatur im alten Ägypten«, in the same collection, pp. 64 - 93. On Harappa see Walter Fairservis, Die Schrift der Indus-Kultur, in: *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, 5, 1983. On Mesoamerica see Berthold Riese, *Communication in Mesoamerica*, Berlin 1986.

On strategies of resistance to literacy and associated institutions, see Peter Probst, *Literacy in a Traditional Society*, manuscript (field work report on the Wimbum, Cameroon), Berlin 1986. On the creation of autonomous script systems, see A. Klingenheben, The Vai-Script, in: *Africa* 6, 1933. Also Maurice Delafosse, Naissance et evolution d'un système d'écriture de creation contemporaine, in: Revue d'ethnographie et des traditions populaires, Vol. III, 1922, pp. 11 - 36. On the search for the »borrowed« texts of the dominant culture, see Harold Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa*, Boston 1979, pp. 271 - 288.

On the cultural-revolutionary acquisition of script, see Paolo Freire, *L'éducation. Pratique de la liberté*, Paris 1971. Colette Humbert, *Conscientisation — Experiences, positions dialectiques et perspectives*, Paris 1985. Also, Georg Elwert and Michael Giesecke, Literacy and Emancipation — Conditions of the Literacy Process and Cultural Revolutionary Movements, in: *Development and Change* 2, 1983, pp. 255 - 276. George Buddruss, Neue Schriftsprachen im Norden Pakistans, in: Assmann (see footnote 1), pp. 231 - 244, gives examples of the establishment of written language which cannot perhaps be labelled revolutionary but brings together the search for identity and moralistic appeal. For limitation with ruling interest, see Furet and Ozouf (as above). On the theory of the transformative potential of literacy, see Havelock (see footnote 1) and Goody 1968 (see footnote 1). Brian Street presents an opposing view in *Literacy and Theory and Practice*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 8 - 9, also Caroline Bledsoe and

Kenneth Robey, Arabic Literacy and Secrecy among the Mende of Sierra Leone, in *Man* 21, 2, pp. 202-226. A similar position is explored by Kathleen Gough in Literacy in Kerala, in: Goody, 1968 (see footnote 1). In my opinion Havelock and Goody's positions are subject to rather limited interpretation in Street's criticism. Georg Simmel (*Soziologie*, Leipzig 1908, pp. 379-382) also pointed out the different possibilities for restriction of information and concealment by written and oral forms of communication.

5. Hans Jensen, *Die Schrift in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Berlin 1969. Albert Terrien de Lacouperie, *Beginnings of Writing in Central and Eastern Asia*, London 1984 (Osnabrück 1965). C.F. and F.M. Voegelin (Typological Classification of Systems with Included, Excluded and Self-sufficient Alphabets, in: *Anthropological Linguistics* 3, 1, 1961, pp. 55-96, here p. 91) admit to evidence of the widespread use of pictogrammes but have limited information on the use of script in non-literate cultures.
6. On the Vai, see Jensen (as footnote 5), p. 215. On the Easter Island see the same author, p. 348. On the Cuna, see Nele and Ruben Perez Kantule and Erland Nordenkjø, *Picture Writings and Other Documents*, Göteborg 1928, p. 17.
7. See Gelb, I.J., *A Study of Writing*, Chicago 1984.
8. See Hans Prem and Berthold Riese, Autochthonous American Writing Systems: The Aztec and Maya Examples, in: Coulmas, Florian and Ehlich, Konrad (as footnote 1).
9. By »associated transformation«, I refer to transformation which reacts to change created by its own forces and which despite change which establishes itself in surrounding structures remains active as a transformative force.
10. Elisabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols., Cambridge 1979. Michael Giesecke, Überlegungen zur sozialen Funktion und zur Struktur handschriftlicher Rezepte im Mittelalter, in: *LiLi* 51/52, 1983, pp. 167-184.

    On the connection between market economy development and literacy, see Emmanuel Todd, *L'enfance du monde, structures familiales et developpement*, Paris 1984. Todd's arguments are of a highly generalized nature. It is important also to take into account that the process of industrialization led »initially to lower and not higher literacy quotas« — Glück (as footnote 1), p. 274. See also Luhmann, 1984 (as footnote 1), p. 40. Michael Giesecke, »Volkssprache« und »Verschriftlichung« des Lebens im Spätmittelalter, in: Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht (ed.), *Literatur in der Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters*, Heidelberg 1980, pp. 39-70.
11. Translator's footnote: This term used frequently by the author to represent the »process of literate formulation« does not have an equivalent in standard English usage.

12. See Michael Giesecke 1983 (as footnote 10).

13. On the relationship between economic development and literacy see Emanuel Todd (as footnote 8). Todd's arguments are, however, rather generalized. It should be noted that industrialization in 19th century England »led first to lower and not higher literacy rates« — Glück (as footnote 1, p. 274).

14. John Markhoff, Literacy and Revolt. Some Empirical Notes on 1789 in France, in: *AJS* 92, 2, pp. 323 - 349.
On the relationship between communication and politics see Maurice Bloch (ed.), *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society*, London 1975. Brian Street (as footnote 4), Bledsoe and Robey (as footnote 4) and Simmel (as footnote 4, pp. 381 - 382).

15. This also applies to oral communication starting with texts intended as lectures. On the concept of communication channels: Giesecke 1980 (as footnote 11). On the distinction between oral and written poesie, see Ruth Finnegan, Literacy versus Non-Literacy: the Great Divide?, in: Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan (eds.), *Modes of Thought*, London 1973. Hans Robert Lug (Nicht-schriftliche Musik, in: Assmann, as footnote 1, pp. 245 - 263) shows the importance of notation for the development of music.

16. See also Nancy Munn, The Spatial Presentations of Cosmic Order in Walbiri Iconography, in: Anthony Forge (ed.), *Primitive Art and Society*, London 1973.

17. In the terms of Maurice Bloch's projection of non-rhetorical communication in non-literate cultures (see footnote 13) it is possible that the projection of our conception of the »everyday« in our culture is influenced by its literate nature.

18. By the term »memory« I refer here to the voluntary (i.e. intentional) storing of information. Involuntary memory is exhibited for example by language acquisition which gives rise to the structural nature of language. Konrad Ehlich, Text und Sprachliches Handeln, in: Assmann (cf. footnote 1), p. 37, shows that the memorizing of lists is a burden to memory and led to the use of script in such historical instances in which the »commonly-defined traditional procedures« were still defined by the spoken word.

19. See Luhmann, »Distinctions Directrices« Über Codierung von Semantiken und Systemen, in: Friedhelm Neidhardt et al. (eds.), Kultur und Gesellschaft, Sonderheft 27 der *KZfSS*, p. 51: »It would be ... inappropriate to conceive the functional differentiation in the same pattern as the decomposition of a whole into parts which are independent of one another. This projection forces repeated observation of 'undifferentiation', because when compared with stratified social orders or with the centre / periphery differentiation, the interdependencies in functional differentiation increase rather than decrease«.

20. On Lesu, see Hortense Powdermaker, *Life in Lesu*, New York 1933, p. 292. On Trobiand see Bronislaw Malinowski, The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages, in: C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards (eds.), *The Meaning of Meaning*,

London 1936, p. 331. The treatment of subjects under abstract rulings also belongs here, see Günter Dux, *Die Logik der Weltbilder*, Frankfurt 1982 and Georg Elwert, *Macht und Herrschaft in Daxomé im 18. Jahrhundert, München 1973, pp. 131 - 141. See also Aleksander Luriia, Cognitive Development — Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, Cambridge, Mass. 1976. On the criticism of »Ethno-Philosophy« see Paulin Hountondji, *Sur la »philosophie africaine« — critique de l'ethnophilosophie*, Paris 1977.

21. Laura Bohannan, A Genealogical Charter, in: *Africa* 22, 1952, pp. 301 - 315. Goody, 1968, as footnote 1. On myth as social constitution, Bronislaw Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, London 1926, p. 23, 46.
22. In the course of fieldwork undertaken on the Fon and Ayizo (1968, 1970, 1972, 1976 in Dahomey / Bénin) on the question of oral tradition, the reply I frequently received from persons informed, but without authority to inform about tradition, was »I don't know«.
23. Herskovits & Herskovits, see above, p. 21, 58. Also Maximilien Quenum, *Au pays des Fons*, Paris 1936, p. 18. For general background of oral tradition see Rüdiger Schott, Das Geschichtsbewußtsein schriftloser Völker, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 12, 1968, pp. 166 - 205 and Hermann Jungraithmayr, *Gedächtniskultur und Schriftlichkeit in Afrika*, Wiesbaden 1981. Also, Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, London 1965.
24. I refer here to the West African state of Bénin as opposed to the Nigerian Province Benin.
25. Field work notes, Georg Elwert (Ayou, Bénin, 1976).
26. James Fox, »Our Ancestors Spoke in Pairs«, Rotines Views of Language, Dialect and Code, in: Richard Baumann and Joel Scherzer (eds.), *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, London 1975, p. 84.
27. See Gudrun Lachenmann, Die Destabilisierung der ländlichen Produktions- und Sozialsysteme in Schwarzafrika, in: *Afrikaspectrum*, 1983, 1, pp. 5 - 25. On the colonial era see Gerd Spittler, *Verwaltung in einem afrikanischen Bauernstaat*, Wiesbaden 1981.
28. See Luhmann, Ausdifferenzierung von Erkenntnisgewinn, in: Nico Stehr and Volker Meja (eds.), *Wissenssoziologie*, Opladen 1980, pp. 102 - 139, particularly p. 20. On the Guru-System see Jonathan Parry, The Brahmanical Tradition and the Technology of the Intellect, in: Joanna Overing (ed.), *Reason and Morality*, London 1984. See also Goody 1968 (as footnote 1). On the Marabout system see Mohammed Arkoun, *Pour une critique de la raison islamique*, Paris 1984. The comparison of the Medress system and the Marabout system which replaced it after its downfall as depicted by Mohammed Arkoun (see above and conversation with the author, January 1987) emphasizes the connection between centralized power and the possibility of allowing criticism to function as a register of intellectual culture. The fact that criticism has become such an in-

tegral part of our academic system ignores the reaction of the subject of criticism. It must be within the power of a higher order to prevent the powerful subject of criticism from hitting back at the critic. Arkoun shows that the downfall of the centralized power structure in Islamic North Africa resulted in the Medress system. The emerging Marabout is knowledgeable (but not learned) passing information on to an illiterate audience. Whether one adheres to the »Traditional element in the gesture of repetition and contradiction« (Aleida and Jan Assmann, epilogue in Assmann, see footnote 1, p. 278) has not yet emerged in the context of literacy. It is dependent on the political, cultural organization of society.

29. See Harold Turner (as footnote 4).
30. See Brian Street (as footnote 4).
31. On the role of the reader, see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Bloomington 1979. On labelling, see Georg Elwert, Die Verschriftlichung von Kulturen — Skizze einer Forschung, in: *Sociologicus* 36, 1, 1986, pp. 65 - 78, here pp. 73 - 74. The stability or alteration of writing systems can be explained by the strength or weakness shown by the institutions which control standards. An example here is the preservation of an unsuitable written form in the Assyrian language or the transition to systems with a low number of characters such as the Phoenician 24 letter system, which occurs when a more impoverished and mobile society is denied of the educative, traditional and controlling forces which act as a support for literacy.
32. See Georg Elwert and Michael Giesecke, Technologische Entwicklung, Schriftkultur und Schriftsprache als technologisches System, in: Burkhardt Lutz (ed.), *Technologie und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung*, Frankfurt (to be published).
33. On written texts based on the spoken word, see Giesecke 1983 (as footnote 10). The reflective forms characteristic for technological development can also exist in oral cultures. All forms of reflection which emerge in literate culture are also available to the individual within an oral culture. It is, however, difficult to conceive that the consistency and historically based differentiation so integral in the reflective forms of literate culture is also a part of oral culture. On linguistic development, see Justus Georg Schottelius, *Ausführliche Arbeit von der Teutschen Haubt Sprache*, Braunschweig 1663.
34. Giesecke, 1980 (as footnote 10).
35. Hildegard Höftmann demonstrates that there is an absence of hypotaxis in the West African Fon language, see *Hypotaxe und Parataxe in den Kwa-Sprachen*, manuscript, Berlin 1987.
36. Hildegard Höftmann, oral account of research, Berlin (GDR), March 13, 1987.
37. Giesecke, 1980 (as footnote 10), refers to »inactive and iconographical knowledge.«

38. Hans Schlaffer (ed.), *Entstehung und Folgen der Schriftkultur*, Frankfurt 1986, p. 21. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, London 1982, pp. 111 - 115.
39. Wilhelm Theodore Elwert, Die europäische Rolle der Commedia dell'arte, in: *Universitas*, September 1986.
40. Goody, 1968 (as footnote 1).
41. On the argument of necessity for increased personnel see Niklas Luhmann, *Macht*, Stuttgart 1975, p. 6. On Dahome, see Elwert 1973 (as above, p. 83), Melville Herskovits, *Dahomey — An Ancient Westafrican Kingdom*, New York 1938, Vol. I, pp. 111 - 112, Vol. II, pp. 26 - 42 and Paul Hazoume, *Doguicimi*, Paris 1937.
42. Louk Box, The Social Organization of Crop Reproduction. *Arbeitspapier 13, Congress der Europäischen Gesellschaft für ländliche Soziologie*, Braga 1986.
43. See Schlieben-Lang 1983, in: Assmann (as footnote 1).
44. See Ann O'Hear, *Colonial Government Agricultural Policies. Working Paper*, Kulaha State Technical College, Illorin 1982.
45. See Paul Richards, *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution — Ecology and Food Production in West Africa*, London 1985.
46. Niklas Luhmann, *Evolution und Geschichte, Soziologische Aufklärung*, Vol. 2, Opladen 1975, p. 83.

    In order to be able to speak of an evolutionary transformation another condition, which is often neglected, must be fulfilled: the transition must be irreversible. This would not seem to apply to those societies which Glück terms as »pre-literate cultures« (see footnote 1, pp. 182 - 185). It possibly applies to developed literary cultures (cultures which avail of literacy in the transfer of social knowledge). The critical element here would seem to lie in the question of oral communication within literate cultures. Oral culture is placed in a defensive position of dependency vis à vis the expanding forces of literacy within the same society. It displays a certain institutional impoverishment when compared with societies of predominantly oral culture and loses rigidity in the definition of registers and genres. It becomes »informalized«. (On the concept of »informalization« see Cas Wouters, Informalisierung und der Prozeß der Zivilisation, in: Peter Gleichmann et al. (eds.), *Materialien zu Norbert Elias »Zivilisationstheorie«*, Frankfurt 1977, pp. 279 - 298.) This informality appears to us as a gain in terms of freedom and flexibility. It does, however, render unlikely any return to predominantly oral culture, as a rigid and differentiated communicative and institutional order constitute essential preconditions of a society based on oral culture. This perhaps justifies the identification of the transition to literate culture as an evolutionary development.

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